THE TRAINING OF A WORKING BOY

PELHAM

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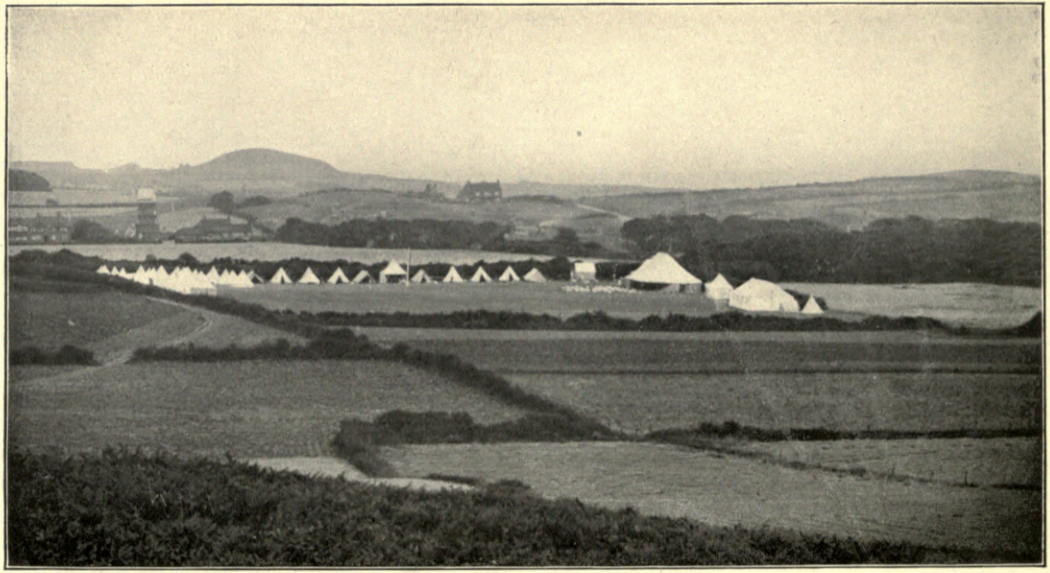

VIEW OF A CAMP

Frontispiece

THE TRAINING OF A WORKING BOY

BY

REV. H. S. PELHAM, M.A.

DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM
PREVIOUSLY
WARDEN OF OXFORD AND BERMONDSEY MISSION
HEAD MISSIONER OF BIRMINGHAM STREET CHILDREN'S UNION

WITH A FOREWORD
BY THE RIGHT REV.
THE LORD BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM

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1914

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TO

MY NEPHEW AND GODSON

H. J. P.

IN THE HOPE THAT IN YEARS TO COME
HE WILL REALIZE, AND DISCHARGE,
HIS DUTY TO THE CHILDREN
OF THE POOR

2056206

FOREWORD.

THIS is a book on 'the boy' for 'the boy' by one who knows 'the boy,' and it will prove, in my judgment, of great value to all desiring to be of use to that most complex and interesting personality, the English lad. For years religious and social workers have confessed that their efforts to keep in proper touch with, and to exercise due influence upon, the boy passing from childhood into adultness have been, comparatively speaking, failures, and yet the future citizenship of our land depends upon how we manage our young manhood at this critical period of life. The author of this book has succeeded where individuals and even institutions have failed, and therefore his experience and his advice must be valuable. Certain facts show themselves prominently in this book as requisite for proper dealing with young humanity. First of all comes the recognition of individuality. No one can expect, whether for forming or strengthening character in a particular person, to do so by means of a superficial connection with the mass of the members of a large club. It is done by remembering that we must

put the something which is ours into close association with the individuality of every other upon whom we desire to exercise influence. Another point which must be borne in mind is that we must work upon the whole of a lad's nature. The spiritual work will be all the more effective if our efforts for the body and for the mind are just as careful as those we use for the moral character. Again we must remember that if we are going to bring the best out of anybody we must believe that the best is there. The success of any social worker, and particularly a social worker with the young, is only then assured when he is conscious of the good that is in the one for whom he is labouring. All through this book may be noticed the unfailing appreciation of the good in the human boy. The book makes no pretence at fine writing, but I venture to say that no one will be able to read it without being conscious that the writer knows his subject, and that his suggestions have the special value which comes from the experience of devoted and richly blessed labour.

H. R. BIRMINGHAM.

BISHOP'S CROFT,
BIRMINGHAM.

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INTRODUCTION.

To add to the large number of books which have been written about the working boy is a task that requires considerable courage. I do not approach it with any idea that these books are inadequate or out of date, for the men who wrote them have in most cases had a longer and wider experience than myself. Rather I have undertaken the task, partly because these books have been devoted to the boy of London and Manchester, while the boy of Birmingham and the Midlands is still unknown so far as literature is concerned; partly for another reason, and this latter reason seems to me important enough to call for a more special explanation.

There are three features of the work on behalf of the working boy, to which I desire to call attention. All thoughtful men are awake to the importance of helping and assisting the working boy, for his lot is obviously a hard one. Countless organizations have therefore sprung up, each designed to remove some special hardship, or to assist the boy in some particular direction. While this interest and activity are of great value, there is a danger that in our

efforts to remove some particular evil or to meet some special need, we may lose sight of the individual boy himself, and his many-sided character. For no effort is of much value unless its final and ultimate object is to give each individual boy the chance of developing to the full the whole of his nature. If he is regarded simply as one of a class, he will remain so, and will never become what his Maker meant him to be. This is not a theoretical danger; it is one of most pressing importance in education, both secular and religious, as well as in the many state and voluntary organizations, which everywhere exist. My first aim, then, in writing this book, is to lay stress on this side of what is termed the problem of the working boy, and to urge the vital importance of keeping the individual in mind in all our philanthropic and religious activities.

This leads to a further point. An individual cannot be helped, except by another individual. That is true of all ages and classes, but it is especially true of the working boy. He cannot, and will not, be organized! We may drive him to school, to a club, or to the Labour Exchange, but the value of each of these depends on the extent of the personal influence of the teacher, the club helper, and the worker on the Care Committee. This appears so obvious that one wonders whether it is really necessary to insist upon it. Yet from practical experience, I am convinced that it is. The classes

in an elementary school, for example, are so large that the teacher is quite unable to give attention to any particular boy. In the same way the value of any club or brigade is too often judged by the efficiency of the organization, or by the general smartness that is shown by the members as a whole. The extent of the personal influence which the helper or officer has upon each boy separately is very often not considered at all. No doubt it is easier to organize than to render personal assistance, but it is infinitely less effective. Organization is indispensable, but it must never be considered as an end in itself, only as the means by which personal help can be rendered efficiently and without waste. A sufficient supply of men and women, endowed with human sympathy, is therefore imperative. There is an abundance of organizers, theorists, and students of sociology, but there is a heartrending scarcity of educated men and women who are willing to be the wise counsellors and sympathetic friends of the individual working boy.

This need is noticeable for another reason. Nothing makes a stronger or more irresistible appeal to the charitable feelings than the street child. Few of his sufferings are due to his own faults or failures; he is the prey of his surroundings. He is always to the fore; he forces, it may be, an evening paper into our hands; and he is invariably cheery, in spite of his hard life. Who can resist

the appeal that he makes? The Press get up Christmas collections for him; he is preached about in school and college chapels; the least generous man feels forced to throw a copper to him in the street. Yet, while this is certainly better than a heartless indifference, it is attended by serious dangers. For after all, the paramount necessity in his training is not so much to alleviate his distress as to teach him to help himself. All who know the poor at all, know full well that one of the main difficulties in improving their position is their lack of self-respect. If the charitable emotions of the public are allowed unfettered scope, then a grave danger is involved in the premium that it puts on cadging. The real demand, therefore, at the present day is not for patronising charity, but for personal service.

This brings me to my last point. There is perhaps no class of man who can render this service so well as the man who has been through the University and the Public School. He has had many advantages, and has learnt many lessons, which eminently qualify him for such work. And yet, comparatively speaking, how few there are who are willing to volunteer! Even in London, the home of the school and college missions, the scarcity cannot be ignored. It is terrible in our provincial cities. I am hopeful that the day is dawning when all those who leave our Public Schools and older Universities

will realize their responsibility and extend to the working boy the hand of real fellowship. If this book, with its description of the boy and his surroundings, and of the many ways in which friendship can be shown, succeeds in persuading a few more of my fellow Public School-men to give that help, I shall be fully rewarded.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY.

WHO is the working boy, and what is he like? Why is it necessary to help him? These are the questions that I desire to answer in this chapter. For it is no exaggeration to say that a very large number of people have but little knowledge of the real nature of the cheery but grimy youngster with whose appearance we are all so familiar. Still less do they realize how important that youngster is and what a tremendous power for good he and his friends are capable of becoming.

I propose to deal with the boy between the ages of twelve and seventeen who is the son of poor parents. That is the age of boyhood, and it is during those five years that he is made or marred. Below the age of twelve he hardly realizes his powers; he is indeed very receptive of influence, but in a quite unconscious manner. On the other hand, when he has reached the age of seventeen, his character has been largely bent in one direction or another. Some, no doubt, may put this age higher, but I am sure that

even they will agree that the critical years when the first all-important choice of life is made are when the boy is between twelve and seventeen.

What is he like? Does he show in any way the same characteristics as his wealthier brother at the Public School?

I am quite sure that all who know this boy will agree that one of his most delightful characteristics is his unceasing sense of *humour*. It may be somewhat shallow, and on the vulgar side, but he can appreciate a joke and can always manage to see the funny side of things. It is well that he can, for without it his life would be almost intolerably dull and would quite inevitably make him a mere machine. There are some men who imagine that it is dull and wearisome work to sit in a club room and try to amuse a boy. It is really just the opposite, for in the boy a club helper finds a cheery and hearty companion, who by his genuine love of fun removes any chance of dullness.

Next to his humour, I would put his *courage*. When one thinks of the trials and hardships that these youngsters have to contend with, one wonders how they can bear it. A Public School boy has every comfort and convenience provided for him by his parents. The working boy has nothing and his parents do not care. No doubt familiarity breeds contempt, and it must be admitted that he can easily manage with less food and scantier clothing

than others in a different class. Even allowing for that, his life is one of hardship. But he is not a grumbler; he may become one in later life, when his self-respect has decayed; but there are many boys who would rather starve than grumble. I remember a boy who volunteered one evening after school to carry some boxes from one room to another. After a quarter of an hour he fainted, and on his recovery, he told me that he had had no food, except for a piece of bread and dripping, for twenty-four hours. There are hundreds like that boy, who would be ashamed to beg. I am confident that though there are many men and women who delight to recount their woes, their children have an inherent self-respect and courage, which are nothing short of marvellous.

He loves a joke; he is full of pluck. He is, moreover, supremely *confident in his own powers.* This is not surprising, for from his earliest childhood he has had to fend for himself. With his mother at work as well as his father, there is no one who has time to do anything for him; he must pick things up by the light of nature, and he does. A small boy was asked one day by a magistrate as to who brought him up. "No one brought me up; I growed," was his descriptive answer. He feels that he stands alone and that he must rely on himself and not on others. This characteristic has its dangerous side. For it makes him rather suspicious

of advice; he instinctively objects to being treated as a child or being told the way to do a thing; he wants to try, and if he fails, it can't be helped. So soon, however, as he realizes that one is really anxious to help him to develop his powers, he willingly responds. But while this is a danger, it is also a source of hope. For it makes him eager to take responsibility whenever an opportunity occurs. Many of his would-be helpers make a serious mistake in failing to recognize this. They feel they must do everything; whereas they should consider it their primary duty to leave as much as possible to the boy himself.

What a fascinating companion such a boy makes! He is always ready to see one's poorest jokes, always cheerful and always confident. These qualities may, it is true, lead him into trouble, but mischievous though he may be, he is none the less attractive.

But there are other points about him to be noticed. He is wonderfully *sharp*. The street in which he lives is full of life and bustle; very irritating to grown-ups, but intensely interesting to an inquisitive youngster. Mr. Bray in his invaluable book on the Town Child has described it in a remarkably vivid manner.

"In this respect he is typical of the environment of a town. It is the abode of the irrelevant, disconnected and casual change. Its panorama, in all the endless variations, produces no conception

of a world of phenomena, related through cause and effect, and merely serves to fill the mind with a whole lumber room of useless though perhaps entertaining rubbish. But incidentally one well-known characteristic of the city matured child finds here its explanation. In this medley of the unexpected, he is continually called on to adjust his actions to some alteration of the environment. By frequent practice he acquires an unusual dexterity in the task. He develops a phenomenal sharpness and readiness of resource; that rapid perception of the new accompanied by an immediate decision of how to meet it. But there is no permanent set of the mind in this attitude towards the world, nothing that will, so to say, subject phenomena to its own purpose instead of merely adapting itself to the exigencies of the moment. Here, too, lies the source of the child's acute perception of all that happens in his neighbourhood, that queer assortment of fragments of knowledge about events and people, which is ready to overflow in a ceaseless stream of words. But nothing connects the facts, nothing rivets them in the memory; the new takes the place of the old, and the past is little more than a miscellaneous collection of scenes through which he has lived during the last few years. Open the door of the crowded lumber-room of the mind and a host of the articles, most recently thrust in, will tumble about your ears."

The result is obvious and inevitable. He becomes sharp beyond description. Nothing escapes his notice, and men and things are summed up in a deft and swift manner. One notices the difference between him and a country boy most conspicuously in camp. The solid, dependable, but rather stupid young yokel, cuts a poor figure in any game or amusement against the quick, sharp youngster off the street.

I remember a very striking proof of this. One Wednesday evening a small boy, a licensed street trader, came in to see me with the request that I would persuade his mother to allow him to play football, instead of selling his papers on the following Saturday. This I refused to do, and thought no more about the boy till he came in on the Friday, with the information that he was going to play football after all. On my request for further information, he told me that he got his papers as usual on the Wednesday evening, and when he saw a policeman close at hand he walked into a public house. When he came out, the policeman summoned him for breaking the licensing regulations. He was sent before the licensing magistrate, who revoked his license for a week. "So," said the boy, "I can't sell my papers however much my mother wants me to." Few others would have had the sharpness to invoke the aid of bye-laws in the satisfaction of his desire to play a game of footer!

His *love of excitement* is due to the same unsettling influence of the street. He must be up and doing; he cannot understand a desire for peace and quiet. Not that this is by any means peculiar to a street boy; people to-day, as a whole, live on excitement. But with him it is intensified. What a thrilling sight it is to see a good fight between two of his neighbours in the street, especially if one of them is a woman! There may be an arrest, or a fire engine will dash past, and he can join in the crowd which rushes along behind. Not far from his home there is an open fruit stall, and why not see whether an apple can be pinched without detection and a thrashing? This is all thoroughly bad, for he is led to seek excitement and change in everything. Cricket is too dull; he demands football or a game of pitch and toss in a secluded spot; he cannot stick at a job for more than a month or two because he desires a change of surroundings.

We have seen his humour, courage, self-confidence, sharpness, and love of excitement. Let me note two other prominent characteristics. As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, he is *responsive* and very receptive of influence whether good or bad. At home he is too often treated with indifference, varied by silly weakness on the one hand and an undue harshness on the other. He gets no attention of any kind there. So when some one comes along who takes an interest in him, he responds

and follows where he is led. This is an important trait in his character, and productive of much result. It is true, I believe, that the very large percentage of those who are now in prison or the workhouse, started their downward course through the influence of 'pals' made at the street corner. It is equally true that those who are now leading honest, decent, Christian lives, owe their characters to the influence of other men and women, rather than to sermons and lectures. It is of vital importance that this should be recognized, for it bears directly on the methods adopted to teach and train him. He may not be willing to learn facts; but he is willing to be led by him who teaches those facts.

Lastly, I come to a feature of his character that must inspire boundless hope. He is above all things *loyal* to his friends. Many a time have I found cases where a widow has had her rent paid by her neighbours, for the poor are ever ready to help a family in times of illness or distress. The boy inherits this, and he will support a pal through thick and thin. To do a job for a friend comes naturally to a street boy; it is a duty that he understands. I am anxious to lay the fullest emphasis on this, because through it he quickly learns to play for his club, rather than for himself, and in it lies the reason for the popularity of a good club. This characteristic, however, is miserably neglected. The appeal made to him by those who would help him,

is far more often along the line of bribery and corruption, than of service and self-sacrifice. True it is that on the surface he appears extraordinarily selfish, but his willingness to be useful to others is really a much more powerful factor in his life.

There, then, the street boy stands. All know him by sight, though there are few who know his nature. It is so plainly necessary to know him before we can hope to help him, that I make no excuse for trying to sketch him as I see him. He is going to be a man one day. In his hands lie the future of the city, the country and the church to which he belongs. His own future, therefore, is one of paramount importance to Church and State. One hears people condemn the exaggerations of working men who are Socialists, while Labour Members are treated with distrust and are accused of a lack of statesmanship and foresight. One seldom finds these critics willing to take the trouble to go and train the future Labour Member, and by personal contact and mutual understanding to give him a wider outlook and a healthier motive. He criticizes and does nothing. Surely men of education and wealth should learn that perhaps the greatest service they can render to the State is to train the future citizen by bringing to bear upon him when he is young and unsettled, the influence of a strong and healthy character.

CHAPTER II.

HIS HOME.

I HAVE tried to give a general estimate of the working boy. There are, of course, many types; in fact, each boy is different from his neighbour. Just as in the Public School there are popular and unpopular boys, shy and pushing boys, placid and passionate boys, so in any street or club many varieties both in temperament and character are found. There is the leader, the 'ragster,' the affectionate youngster, the boy who is retiring and apt to get pushed aside, the thoughtful scholar, and the 'harum-scarum' young fellow. All are there, and it is the first duty of one who wishes to assist them, to pierce below the outer surface and find the true nature. To do that, we must try and understand his surroundings and the influences to which he is subject, the most potent of which is undoubtedly the home. There are few things more striking than the difference between the son of devoted and sensible parents, however poor they may be, and the boy who has been neglected at home. It is imperative that

we should spend some time in thoroughly examining the home of the working boy, and, so far as possible, try to judge the nature of its influence.

We must, however, be quite clear as to whose home we are going to examine, for there are many social scales even among the poor. At the top we have the skilled artisan and the mechanic, earning something like £2 a week. Next to him there are the policeman and postman, the small but prosperous shopkeeper, who lives in the poorest parts perhaps, but holds himself aloof from his neighbours, except when his business demands otherwise. With them there is the ' boss ' of the public house at the corner, who knows all the gossip and scandal of the district. Below them again in the social scale there is a curious assortment of those who are employed in semi-skilled trades, and those who are unskilled, but whose work is assured. This class is undoubtedly in the majority, and it is the class, moreover, from which many clubs draw their members.

Next to them one finds those whose work is purely casual or seasonal ; who are in work for one month and for the next two months are unemployed. Relying on the wages of their sons at work and on the earnings of their children from the sale of newspapers, they are quite content to muddle along as best they can, and will not bestir themselves to seek regular employment. They are not degraded in any vicious sense, but inherently lazy. Some of

them are extraordinarily nice and careful of their children, but quite incapable of sticking to any regular work. The sons of this type of men are very similar to those of the last type. They live next door, go to the same school, play together in the street, and attend the same club. No doubt, there is a certain amount of difference in their home training, but their other surroundings are the same.

There are many, however, who cannot afford to take a house; furnished apartments or the 'doss' are their domicile. Those who go to such places are of the lowest and most worthless type. They have been the proud possessors of a home, but have not paid the rent and so they left precipitately, or as we say in the slums they 'shot the moon.' They shift from place to place, and to them home-life is an unknown quantity.

What, then, are the buildings which they misname home? Few rich people ever penetrate into the actual home; they are content to meet the inmates at the club or other meeting place. We hear a great deal about the housing problem, and terrifying statistics are hurled at an unsympathetic audience. It is not my purpose to paint in any vivid colours the dirt and squalor of the homes. It is too easy to exaggerate, although in saying this, I do not wish in any way to minimize the seriousness of the problem. The need for reform is obvious. For

A COURT

Facing p. 12

what could be worse than the average house in one of the courts, so common in Birmingham, where the people we are dealing with live and move and have their being. A narrow, ill-lighted passage leads from the street into the courtyard, with houses round three sides of it. Sometimes the other side is open, though it is more often built in with a high wall. Let us knock at the front door of one of these houses, and if we can persuade the inhabitants that we are not the rent collector, a cordial welcome is given to us. We walk straight into a room of twelve feet square, and it is indeed a strange sight that presents itself. Let us imagine it is about seven o'clock at night. The father is just back from work : he has lit a pipe and is demanding tea. The elder son, a boy in the iron trade, comes in with oily clothes and oily hands, and everything he touches becomes oily also. The sister is there too, and the younger children who are still at school. The mother, who got in half an hour before, is trying to do two things at once, making tea and keeping that mischievous child, who is in the second standard, from falling into the fire. After a few minutes the son disappears into what resembles a cupboard to try and wash the outer covering of oil from off his hands and face. The sister follows suit, for she is going to walk out that evening with her young man. Upstairs, there are two bedrooms, with one bed in each, and here the family of six have to sleep, three

in a bed. There is a good deal of competition for the middle place! Such is one type of home. Rather better is the house facing the street, as sometimes the cupboard we noticed as the washing place is enlarged into a small sort of scullery, and there may even be a yard behind.

What kind of home-life exists in these homes? What are the difficulties which confront its occupants?

In the first place, then, the parents are often of a very poor type, and have no permanence in their work. For this reason the amount of furniture depends on the activity of the father. One week the dining-room, drawing-room, kitchen, smoking-room, or nursery (call it what you will, for it is the same room) is filled with furniture. The week after, it is bare, for the furniture is round the corner at the pawnbroker's. This must have a most disturbing influence upon the children. Public School boys often remember their room at home by some special piece of furniture, but with the children of the poor there is no such bond.

The overcrowding of the home is also intolerably unhealthy. The crush in the bedroom is bad, unspeakably bad. If, for instance, one of the family has consumption, it is highly unlikely that the other members will escape the clutch of that horrible disease. It requires unceasing labour on the part of the mother to keep it clean and orderly;

indeed, it is impossible if, as is often the case, she goes to work as well.

The publicity of the life of the inhabitants of the court, again, is productive of many evils. As the five or six families living in the court are forced to share a common washing place and a common lavatory, there is no privacy at all. Each one knows all about the others, and the children on their way home late in the evening often meet a drunken neighbour in the narrow entry. They become speedily acquainted with evil from their earliest childhood, evil to which eventually they become indifferent ; for familiarity breeds contempt.

There is another serious feature in the life of these people. They move incessantly from house to house, either because they cannot pay the rent, or else because, as Tommy has gone to work and is bringing in an extra six shillings a week, they feel they can afford a better and bigger house. The mother gets ill, or the father has a fit of laziness, and back they drift again to the poorer quarters. They do not move very far, for they are wonderfully conservative as regards locality. But their addresses change from month to month, as a register of addresses of a Boys' Club will clearly prove.

In the home itself things are no better. Very often the parents have married early, before they have had sufficient to live upon, which too often means unhealthy, if not feeble-minded children. In

many cases drunkenness and impurity are rife, while the income depends on the success of the father's gambling adventures.

Before one attempts to draw any general conclusion, there is, however, one thing which must be noted. There is an increasing demand for women's labour. In Birmingham this demand is incessant. This is quite disastrous, for as a result the children are left to their own devices from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. The home is locked, with them outside, so that the gutter must form the luncheon table. The physical strain that such work imposes upon the mother too often shows itself in the children, an evil which demands fuller attention than it is possible to give it here.

The effects that such homes have upon the boy who is drawn from them, may be summarized under two headings, *i.e.* the absence of any attachment to a house as a home ; and also, and more important still, the lack of personal attention to his training.

The reason for the first of these evils, the looseness of the home life, is clear and obvious. No proper and sound home life is possible when the boy has had ten or fifteen houses misnamed home. To us the house in which we romped as children, and to which we returned with glee at the end of the school term, was the embodiment of all the many home ties and affections. It may have been only sentiment, but even so it had a wonderful influence upon

us. How different with the working boy! He has no special room, where he can store his treasures and to which as he grows up he can look as the place where he dreamed dreams and formed ideals for his life. With him all is change and restlessness, and those are reflected in his wild, reckless and impulsive character. Solidarity, dependability, constancy and persistency he has never learnt, simply because he has never had that permanent home to which they belong.

But, further, we come to the other disturbing feature of the home life of these boys, and that is the very little attention paid to them at home. The attitude of the parents to the children is a serious one, and needs full comment and explanation. What is this attitude? In what way or in what methods do they attempt to train the boy? One may say that there are three different types in this respect.

(1) In the first place, we have those who show an utter indifference to the welfare and future of their son. The case of Arthur C., a member of a club, comes to my mind. Though very unreliable and rather fickle in his aims and desires, he was a good chap at heart. One night he met me as I was coming back late, and told me that he could not find his family. He had had tea with them at about six or seven, and had then gone off to the club. He returned to go to bed about half-past ten, to find his

parents had gone and taken all their belongings with them. Not only that, but they had left no message as to where they had gone. He was, therefore, homeless for the night. That is just an example of the indifference which is shown by many parents towards their children. This indifference is quite consistent except on one or two occasions. When a boy is a nuisance in the home, disturbs the father's pipe of peace, or gets in the mother's way, he gets a thrashing. After that outbreak, indifference again reigns supreme, until he is on the point of going to work, when the father will rouse himself and insist upon the boy earning a big wage, regardless of future prospects. Apart from such occasions, however, the son plays no part, and has no share, in the home life. What wonder is it that he does not love his home and that he regards it not as a true home, but as a common lodging-house where he and his parents happen to live together.

It is easy to see the result. That boy has peculiarities of temperament, individual talents and powers which need development. The home is where these should be recognized and turned into useful channels; where his powers should be developed by kind, strong, sensible discipline. No such thing, however, occurs; to his parents he is merely a parcel of flesh and bones. He is neglected, and he emerges stunted in growth, warped in character, and indifferent to the call of his higher

nature. We would like to believe that such parents are the exception, but experience forbids this hope, for they are all too common at the present time.

(2) We turn to a second type. There are many parents who do honestly and sincerely wish to do their best by the children. But stress of circumstances and ignorance forbid it. The home is small, and the mother is fully occupied, when back from work, with looking after the youngest children and in trying to keep the house neat and tidy. The father, a sober, self-respecting man, smokes his pipe in the corner. There is literally no room for the boy who wants his fun and romp, and he is unwillingly but by force of necessity pushed out into the street, till the children have gone to bed. The mother and the father, therefore, see but little of their son, and it is extraordinary how ignorant the parents can be about him, not because they do not want to know, but because they have no opportunity.

Again, they are often entirely ignorant of how to train him. I remember going to see a woman about her son. Our conversation was most difficult as the baby was yelling in a cot in the corner. I was thunderstruck when the mother seized her husband's pot of beer and gave the baby a drop or two to drink. I vehemently expostulated, but she said that the baby liked it, and when I pointed out how bad it was for the child, she was quite

astonished. Why *should* she know better? She has never been taught how to care for her children, and what is good or bad for them. The same ignorance displays itself in their methods of discipline. One day they show a silly weakness, the next day an undue harshness. There is no method, and the result is that the boy believes discipline depends upon the temper in which his parents happen to be. They quite honestly care about their sons, but they do not know how to put this care into efficient practice.

(3) It is with relief that we turn to another side of the picture. There are many homes where the mother and father not only take an interest and pride in their children, but in spite of adverse circumstances train and discipline them in a manner beyond praise. I know of a home in a poor court of Birmingham where there are four children. The family is genuinely poor, but the children do not show it. The boys are always clean and neat, though a close scrutiny would show many patches; they are polite and obedient, and unselfishness marks their conduct at home. Behind them are parents who know and understand the responsibilities and duties of their position; a strong discipline is maintained and one that is actuated by a sympathetic knowledge of their children's individual needs and eccentricities; they know how to make full use of what they have, even though

it is but little. It is with utter thankfulness that we say that such homes do exist, and we take heart in hoping that they will increase.

Before I turn to other subjects, there are two other points to be mentioned. Many people wax enthusiastic about the state of the clothes of these children, and no doubt their enthusiasm has a cause. Take, for instance, the boots that the poor buy. The soles of these boots are often of the cheapest stuff, and nothing more than mere cardboard. Their other clothes are cheap beyond description, so that it is no wonder if many go ragged and ill-shod. I am doubtful, however, whether it is as bad as it seems, for there are hundreds of agencies to supply clothes, besides the charitable individual effort. Although I do not wish to say that no child need go ragged, for there are some who seem to be left out, yet I am quite certain that parents realize that money is to be made out of ragged children, and that a bootless boy can make certain of sixpence, if not more, on a snowy day.

The other important point is the food, which is scarce at the best of times. Let me give a menu of a child for a day.

Eight o'clock : two slices of bread and dripping, and a cup of very strong tea.

One o'clock : a cheap stew and another slice of bread and dripping.

Six o'clock : a cup of tea, and two slices of bread.

If they are fortunate enough to get an extra penny, they may be able to visit a fish shop before bed. That menu is often reduced. And one frequent cause for such is the thriftless habits of the mother. There is much waste in the home, even among the poorest, and it is no unusual sight to see big crusts of bread thrown aside with a recklessness and waste, more to be expected in a millionaire than in those who have a hard struggle to make both ends meet.

One word in conclusion. The home life is the most potent influence in the boy's life. But it is being threatened from all sides. Well-meaning philanthropists and a sentimental public are too prone to take the burden off the parents, little realizing that it only accentuates their indifference towards their children. It is imperative that the public, and especially social reformers, should realize that the nation is built up on the home, and that the whole force of their influence should be directed to strengthening the family ties, and to purifying and elevating the home life and influence.

CHAPTER III.

HIS EDUCATION.

For nine years of his life, the boy is forced to attend an Elementary School for twenty-seven and a half hours a week. It will be admitted that his future depends on the kind of education that he receives during that time, especially when it is remembered how little training he receives at home. Although it may be true that with the better class boy the function of the school is to develop the initial training of the home, it is different with the son of the poorest parents. For in their case education has to eradicate the evil influence of the home, before it can implant in him the most rudimentary ideas of right and wrong. It is clear, therefore, that the work of an Elementary School must be widely different from that of the Preparatory and Public School. The work of the former is much more difficult, for it must be negative as well as positive; it must aim at destroying as well as at building up.

The influence of a good school upon the neighbouring district is reflected in the way in which the

building, with its somewhat florid tower, rises above the squalid courts and houses by which it is surrounded. Very often it is the only solid building in the district; it is certainly the brightest, while its playground is usually the only open space in the neighbourhood. It is an oasis in a desert of squalor and dirt; for, apart from the Church, it is the only source of those influences which are elevating and wholesome. It is, therefore, essential that the whole-hearted energies of the community should be directed towards bringing these schools up to the highest pitch of efficiency and usefulness. They are not only places of learning; they are the source of all that tends to uplift the childhood of the slum.

Let me say at the outset that I do not pretend to be an educationist in the limited sense of the word, for I have never undertaken the arduous duties of a schoolmaster. The knowledge, from which I write, is based upon a wide friendship with hundreds of Elementary School boys and teachers, and incessant visits to the schools. Any criticisms also that I may put forward are those of a man who realizes the good work that the schools are doing—and longs for more!

The first matter that attracts our attention is concerned with the subjects that a child is expected to learn. Reading, writing and arithmetic must be three indispensable parts of all elementary education, as it is upon them that the whole structure

of education is based. This is generally admitted in theory, and so it would seem to be unnecessary to do more than notice it. Yet it is in fact very necessary that repeated emphasis should be laid upon their importance. Complaints are frequently made by business men that it is very difficult to secure an office boy who can write well, and who can add up a list of figures with any degree of accuracy. While it is no doubt true that the purpose of education is not to make all boys efficient clerks, yet there is no trade in which a boy will do well whose calculations appear, as is often the case, to be based on the assumption that $2+2=5$. There are countless boys who, twelve months after they have left school, are quite unable to write legibly, to read properly or to calculate accurately. Apart, however, from the industrial prospects of the boy, his future will be immeasurably poorer and narrower if he is unable to read well. With the Free Libraries so close at hand, literature of a good description is available to the poorest, and yet few of the younger generation read much beyond the football news or the latest murder. It is open to doubt whether our schools are doing what they might in developing in the boys a taste for reading good literature. Although amended editions of Scott's novels and other similar books are in use in many schools, they are apt to be treated as a subject to be taught, more than as a pleasure to be enjoyed. For this

and other reasons greater attention should be directed to securing efficient instruction in the three R's.

At present this is difficult owing to the large quantity of extra subjects which are crowded into the time-table. History, geography, singing, drawing, woodwork, and elementary science are all given their due proportion of time out of the twenty-seven and a half hours in the week, while a few progressive schools are beginning to teach subjects which we may describe as utilitarian. In one school, for instance, boys are taught to mend their clothes, a most useful occupation. Crowds upon crowds of facts are pushed into the boy's mind, which are promptly forgotten six months after he has left school. Besides this, too little attention is paid to the natural bent of the boy. For instance, all boys must learn drawing, though it is quite clear that there are many boys in every school who are by nature unable to gain any advantage whatever from this form of instruction, though they may be musical or at any rate capable of gaining help from singing. Thus it would appear to be a reasonable reform that these subjects should be made optional.

History is an important subject, for there would probably be less bigotry in our trade unions if our boys were given a taste for it. Dates and the order of the succession of the Kings of England are driven into the boy's head, and insufficient attention

is paid to interesting him in the gradual development of his country. It might be arranged, for instance, that teachers should take boys to see the neighbouring buildings and places of historic interest, so as to make the instruction objective, though time for these visits should be provided for during the regular school hours, as it is unfair to expect the teacher to do much in this way in his spare time. The supreme aim should be to develop in the boys a real taste for those things which will be of interest to him in later years, and not merely to give him a knowledge of a miscellaneous crowd of unconnected facts.

It must be admitted that one of the chief obstacles in this direction is the modern system of inspection. For the teacher's reputation is made or marred by the alacrity with which the boys in his standard answer the questions of the inspector. He is compelled to aim at fixing facts into the minds of his pupils, so that they will be able to answer the questions asked in the examination. This system is detrimental to the development of tastes. It might be quite easily arranged that such inspection should be held in the three elementary subjects, but that it should be dispensed with where history, literature, and kindred subjects are concerned. Any slackness or inability on the part of the teacher could easily be detected in other ways, and it would have the immense advantage of leaving the teacher

free to develop the boys' taste along his own lines. Teachers are human beings with human limitations, and it is asking too much of them to adopt with success the methods laid down by a central body. They should be allowed greater freedom to choose their own lines, especially when it is remembered that this freedom is always granted to masters in Preparatory and Public Schools, whose task is infinitely easier.

Before we leave the question of the curriculum, I should like to draw attention to a matter in which reform seems to be needed. A smattering of knowledge rather than intelligence is the result of much of our education, and the reason for this is not hard to find. For the art of teaching has been brought to such a high pitch of efficiency that, provided the boy will keep quiet, knowledge drifts into his head with very little effort being required of him. Seldom is he called upon to worry a thing out for himself as is the case with the better class boy, who is given a piece of translation or some mathematical problem which he has to make the best of by himself in his hour of preparation. As it is impossible to expect him to do any work at home, it would be advisable that half an hour each day should be set apart for this unaided struggle with a problem which will force him to think for himself. In this way his intelligence will be aroused, and his keenness stimulated, with the result that he will not be an unthink-

ing receptacle of facts, as he is apt to be under the present system.

This brings us to another difficulty with which the teacher is confronted. His work is to develop as well as to teach the boy, and he is expected to undertake this task with sixty or more boys, which is the average number in any one standard. It is quite unreasonable to expect this of any man. He has no time in which he can pay attention to the needs, difficulties or aspirations of any one particular boy, for it takes him all his time to keep them quiet and to teach them the necessary amount. Thus the boy is apt to be regarded as one of a class, not as an individual with his particular needs and idiosyncracies. The Board of Education has begun to pay attention to this, and it is insisting on a general reduction in the size of the classes. But reform comes slowly, and public opinion must be raised on this matter if the ideal is to be attained. We are told that it will mean a great additional expense. Very likely it will, but surely it is a most necessary expense if the aim of education is the development of the boy as an individual. From this, it necessarily follows that some differentiation should be made among the boys. At present the normal boy glides up the school, spending a year in each standard, usually ending at the sixth. There are, of course, brilliant boys whose progress up the school is meteoric, and who reach the seventh

standard at an extraordinarily early age, while, on the other hand, there are a few dullards who lag far behind. But with the normal boy progress is slow and steady, and he proceeds up the standards without any attention being paid either to his natural inclinations, as we noticed above, or to his future life.

Reform in the latter direction is very difficult, for it would be quite impossible, even if it were advisable, to give each boy specialized treatment according to the trade which he was likely to enter on leaving school. But much more might be done than is done at present. It is sometimes the case that there is a particular trade in the locality, into which many of the boys are eventually drafted. Surely it would not be very difficult to give these boys some instruction of a special character which would be of value to them in their work. We have in Birmingham a most energetic and public-spirited Jewellers' Association, which has secured differential treatment on the lines that I have indicated. Both boys and girls are chosen from the neighbouring Elementary Schools to attend the special jewellers' school on certain afternoons of the week, where they receive instruction in designing and other similar subjects which will be of direct value to them in the future. I am quite willing to admit that it would be difficult to extend this system when trade is so subdivided, and when few firms do more than one particular piece of work. But if this principle

is accepted and constantly kept in view, it would be found, I am certain, that much more could be done in this direction than is at present realized.

We now turn to the all-important matter of discipline, an indispensable factor in the full education of a boy, and one to which the schools are giving more and more attention. By the time that he leaves school, the boy has learnt the elementary ideas of obedience, smartness and courtesy. With little or no support from the home, our schools are succeeding in turning wild and reckless youngsters into smart and obedient boys. Their work is nothing short of marvellous, considering the difficulties under which they labour. The regular drills, the insistence on punctuality, and the strict maintenance of order have a far-reaching effect upon the character, and it is an encouraging sight to visit a slum school and see the results of such training upon the elder boys. While I do not wish to criticize such magnificent work, I must admit that I feel that the cane is too much in evidence. There is a danger that the incessant tappings on the hand with the cane will produce a certain contempt for punishment. I believe that it would be wiser to reduce the number of punishments and to increase their severity, for a sound thrashing once or twice during his school life would do a boy infinitely more good than any number of petty canings on the hand. Indeed I am of opinion that the discipline of a good school

could be maintained without the cane and in ways which are more educative and less punitive. For instance, many schools have some system by which the elder boys, called monitors, have small duties entrusted to them, giving a sense of responsibility that tends to develop their self-respect. This is all-important for a working boy to learn, for he is the object of much charity and sympathy, through which he will be injuriously affected unless the school counteracts it by developing in him that idea of sturdy independence to which we as a nation owe so much. It is difficult to do a great deal in this respect, but it is possible to give many small duties and posts of responsibility, and this would certainly be a step forward in the right direction.

But, however good the instruction and the discipline may be as systems, the real burden lies upon the teacher. Character is made by character, and it is the personal influence and example of his teacher which prove the main factors in a boy's training. The extent of this influence is indeed limited by the size of the classes and by the shortness of the school hours, but even allowing for these difficulties the teacher has a great opportunity, which many are quick to seize. Both in school, and out of their own leisure, many of them are devoting both time and attention to the boys committed to their care. Unstinted praise must be given to them for their devoted work.

We wish that this were equally true of all teachers, but unpleasant as it is to say so, many of them regard their work simply as a profession, with but little consciousness of their grave responsibility. The blame for this must partly be attributed to our system of training. A man's ability to teach is tested by examination, and it is on the result of this that his future largely depends. His keenness for the work itself, his power of sympathizing with, and understanding, boys are not among the set subjects, and are too often disregarded when appointments are made.

This naturally affects the system by which he is prepared for his work in the Training Colleges. Many of them do lay great stress on the personal equipment for the work, but when the examination is prominent, it is forced somewhat into the background and cannot receive the amount of attention to which it is entitled. It is high time, therefore, that the public should demand that the teachers should be only those who realize the responsibilities of the work. We must get the best men trained in the most efficient way.

If we are to do this, it is necessary that we should give them salaries proportionate to this work, for the present position in this respect is disgraceful. There are few more responsible positions, and it is imperative that we should secure the best men and pay them accordingly.

There is one defect in the Elementary School which impresses itself most forcibly on the mind of an old Public School boy or University man, and that is the weakness, and sometimes the utter lack, of any *esprit de corps* shown by the boys for their school. To neglect this is to rob the education of a most important factor. For it should be clearly an essential feature of any system of education to develop in the boy a willingness to forget himself for the good of others. To neglect this is seriously to damage the usefulness of the training. No man is of much value unless he has learnt the duty of serving the community of which he is a member, To give a boy a pride in his school, to stir his enthusiasm for the success of the school football team, to teach him that if he does wrong he disgraces the school as well as himself, are among the most important lessons that can be taught. Two simple methods by which this can be done are the provision of school caps, and honour boards on which are inscribed the names of boys who have won scholarships, or prizes in swimming or other athletics. The value of the school football or cricket team is also immense, for the keenness that is aroused by the regular competitions among the different schools has deep influence upon the school, and many teachers are indefatigable in their work of choosing and training their team.

For games are an educative force in themselves

if played under proper supervision, and it would be time well spent if an hour or two could be given out of school hours to organized games. The maintenance of this *esprit de corps* among the boys who have left is well done through the organization of Old Scholars' Clubs. Though they have not yet been adopted to any great extent, the marked success of the few in existence will encourage their adoption in other places. In this respect, I should like to draw attention to a very remarkable effort that was made by the headmaster and teachers of one of the poorest of the Elementary Schools in Birmingham. In the evening of two nights in each week, the desks were moved out of the way, and a vaulting horse, parallel bars and rings took their place. In other rooms quiet games and a small library were provided, while space was also found for boxing and wrestling. White vests and knickers were provided at some nominal expense. Through this club mutual friendships were formed between boys and masters which had a strong influence upon the tone of the whole school.

It is not right, however, that all this work should be left to the teachers. A great deal can be done by voluntary men and women who will take an unofficial interest, not in the whole school only, but in the individual boys. The school managers are very often little more than patrons of the school. It is really urgent that they should realize that

their position entails upon them a responsibility in rendering unofficial help to the overworked teachers in a slum school. It is in the supply of this kind of help that Voluntary Schools have a great advantage over the ordinary Council Schools, for the members of the Church to which the school is attached are available for supplementing the ordinary work of the teachers in the directions that I have suggested, and in personal work among the children. Again and again, masters in Council Schools have told me how they envied the Voluntary Schools in this respect.

For the teachers have other burdens thrust upon them, which cannot strictly be described as educational, and yet are essential complements to any school. There is first of all the provision of free meals for necessitous children. Breakfasts, consisting of porridge and treacle, with a plentiful supply of bread and butter, are supplied on five days in the week to those who are clearly proved to be otherwise unprovided for at home. No one can deny that these meals are essential. It is all very well for comfortable business men to talk about undermining parental responsibility. For, although it is generally agreed that this is a danger which must be carefully guarded against, it is perfectly useless to attempt to teach any boy who, through lack of food, is physically unfit to learn. It is, to put it in the lowest ground, economy to feed the boy

so that the instruction given to him may not be wasted.

Further, education must take into account the health of the boy as well as his mind, because a stunted and weak generation is as bad for a nation as one that is ignorant and stupid. Men have partially realized this, and have not only insisted upon the provision of food but also upon the careful medical supervision of the boy. Medical officers are appointed to the schools, who make a periodical inspection of the children, and either secure them treatment at the school clinic or make strong recommendations to the parents to see that their children are attended to. It is here also that voluntary helpers are needed, for the parents will not always follow the doctor's advice unless they are urged to do so from outside; while financial help is sometimes required, as, for instance, in the provision of spectacles. The development of the boy's physique is as important as the training of his mental powers, so that the provision of meals and the medical care must be treated as essential parts of the work of the school, and no amount of money or labour spent on them can be too large.

I have left to the end two of the most important points of our whole educational system. The first is that the boy's school life ends too early. At the age when he is becoming more fully conscious

of his own powers and limitations, and so needs the wisest guidance and the strongest influence, he is plunged headlong into the office or the factory, where he gains his independence and is deprived of the control and discipline of the school. On his fourteenth birthday, and not a day later, he leaves school, and no one can say him 'nay.' That is sufficiently bad, but it is worse in the case of the clever boy who leaves even before this time, gaining his exemption by passing the labour examination. For they are the very boys who would profit from a fuller education, which would enable them to rise above their fellows and, it may be, raise their fellows with them. No such further education except that of the secondary school is open to them. Even if they stay at school until fourteen, their time is either spent in going over the same ground as before, or, as is often the case, in running messages and doing odd jobs for the headmaster. Usually, however, they leave school, and act as errand boys, the law of the land forbidding them entrance to a factory until they are fourteen. Here, then, is a clear case for reform. It should be made impossible for these clever boys to leave school early, and it should be arranged that as a matter of course they should be transferred to some school where a higher and better education is given to them.

Many would go further and raise the age of leaving up to sixteen, unless it was clearly proved that the

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boy could only be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, in which case he might be allowed to go to a factory earlier. Public opinion is at present opposed to this reform, as likely to inflict a hardship on the poorest families, as it is forgotten that if you take this large supply of boys off the labour market, there will probably be a proportionately bigger demand for men's labour. It seems likely, if not certain, that the loss to the parents of the boys' wages would be nearly compensated for in other directions. At any rate, it is our duty to see that our future citizens are adequately trained, and if this cannot be done, now that the boys leave school at the age of fourteen, we must insist that something shall be done at any cost.

Until, however, the time comes when the public will understand the importance of this, we ought to be able to secure to the boy some continued education. Under the present conditions of boy labour, it would be futile to make attendance at an evening continuation school compulsory. This is no doubt desirable, but with it must go the limitation of the hours of labour. On the evenings when the boy is to attend his classes, he should be able to leave work at 5 o'clock, so that he will not be so tired as to be incapable of benefiting from the education. Better still, he should be forced to attend some technical or special trade school on two or three afternoons of the week. It is a scandal that a boy

should be able to snap his fingers at the school on his fourteenth birthday.

The other point which I have left to the end is the most important of all. The boy's nature is not composed only of mind and body. He has a soul; he has religious instincts; he has a genuine reverence for what is good and noble. His religious education is one of quite crucial importance, and ought not to be considered as a subject for sectarian strife. I do not desire to enter into a heated discussion as to the relative merits of Council and Voluntary Schools. I am convinced, however, of the superiority of the latter, not only because they possess a good supply of voluntary helpers to supplement the work of teachers, but also because they can meet two needs in the religious education of the boy which the Council School cannot meet.

In the first place, it is quite essential that the teachers should be convinced of the truth of what they teach. This is necessary in all education, but especially so when the subject is religion. This essential condition can be secured in the Voluntary School only, for although I readily admit very many Council teachers do hold genuine religious convictions, there is no guarantee that this will always be the case. This, to my mind, is the all-important point, for it is the teacher, rather than the subject, that counts, and it is important that in some schools, at any rate, we should be quite certain of our teachers.

Further, no religious education is of any value unless it is definite and related to something tangible which the boy can appreciate. Vague generalities as to the importance of being good will carry no weight with him once he has left the school, for he requires something more solid and concrete. If, on the other hand, we teach him the meaning of the Church, as the body of Christ, if we show him that he can only obtain his full powers as a member of that body, and that as a churchman it is his duty to serve his friends, he will not only take an intelligent interest in the Church's teaching, but will also naturally attach himself to the organization of his Parish Church. These are two essential factors in all religious education, and they are only secured in the Voluntary Schools.

Education is the full development of all the boy's faculties, body, mind and soul; it must not be regarded simply as the mere teaching of facts. All the criticisms that I have offered are directed to securing that this development should be more adequately carried out, and that the personal influence of the teacher, which is the chief factor, should be given freer scope than it receives at present. We have much to be thankful for; but there remains still more to be done before our schools are really able to develop the boy into the kind of man that his Maker intended him to be.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS RECREATIONS.

THE value of properly organized games in the training of character will be readily admitted by all healthy men. It is no less true that inadequate recreation and undesirable amusements are proved to have an injurious effect. It is therefore necessary for us to look closely into the working boy's recreations, and to see whether these are likely to have a good or a bad influence upon his character. If it is bad, then we must discover what possibilities there are in the way of reform.

For, in spite of his unhealthy surroundings, the working boy is full of life and go. To sit still and do nothing is something which he has never tried. He must be up and doing as soon as he leaves the school or the workshop. This is true of all boys, but especially true of the son of working parents, for his school makes little or no regular provision for athletics, and his natural energies have no healthy outlet elsewhere.

The neighbourhood in which he lives provides a

considerable amount of interest and excitement. But he desires quite naturally to play some game, or, to use his own words, 'to have a swank.' Thus he insists on having a game of football. With the aid of his friends, he will endeavour to beg, borrow or steal a small ball. Now and then he may have a piece of luck and get the loan of a football for the Saturday, which he proceeds to use in the street on the Friday evening. Failing this, a piece of paper tied up with string makes quite an effective substitute. The street is the only available pitch, and though the gutter and a passing cart are a bit of a nuisance, quite a thrilling game can be enjoyed, so long as no policeman appears. I remember one Christmas holidays, hearing an absorbing account of a keen match that had been played between the boys of two neighbouring streets. Hot and dirty, they recounted to me with zest all the interesting incidents of the game. The fact that that ball had now and then disappeared within a house did not seem to have interfered at all with their pleasure.

If this form of amusement fails, he will pass away the time in some exciting games, the rules of which baffle the casual observer. It would seem as if the main features of the game were to run across the street as often as you can without being run over, or caught by your opponent, to give as many nervous shocks as possible to grave business men

and old ladies, and then, if your opponent catches you, to say he cheated and to back up your argument to this effect with muscular force. All very splendid, but hardly educative for the boy or conducive of peace of mind to the passer by.

The fact is that he has very little opportunity for 'letting off steam.' He has little time to go far from his home, and there is little if any space near by. For, strange as it may seem, the school playground is closed to him in the evening. It is quite impossible to understand why this should be so. The Board of Education insists on each school being provided with a good sized playground, which is really only used just before school and during the intervals in the morning and afternoon sessions. Some authorities are realizing the ridiculousness of this, and are opening them in the evening. But the opposition of the caretaker, and the fear of damage to the school windows keep the majority back from taking this obvious step.

Apart from the playground, there are very few open spaces in the slums. There are some which have been provided because perhaps the land couldn't be used in other ways. The parks are in the suburbs among the houses with a garden, and even there he will usually find a neat little notice informing him that he must 'keep off the grass.' On the Saturdays he may get a chance of a game on the regular pitches in the park in the

morning. In the afternoon they are occupied by teams of clerks, etc., who could easily afford to go further afield and hire a ground. The first necessity, therefore, is the provision of more open spaces in the centre of the town. Thanks to the tireless energy of Mr. N. G. Chamberlain and others, we in Birmingham are being provided with a few ideal places for the children. One of them has a large asphalt ground, where boys can kick footballs about, with swings and some few gymnastic appliances along the sides.

Even this, however, is insufficient. For it is obvious that, without proper supervision, they will not be taken full advantage of. Here, then, comes the importance of arranging organized games for the children in the evening. A big step in this direction has also been taken in Birmingham, and quite invaluable work has been done by a band of willing workers. Voluntary helpers make themselves responsible for an open space, and arrange and umpire at games of stump cricket and rounders. What a tremendous opportunity presents itself here! There must be hundreds of men and ladies who could well spare two hours from five to seven in the evening to give the children a jolly time, and teach them to ' play the game.'

As I have already noticed, many schools have their own school football team, which enters for the inter-school competition. Quite apart from its

value to the tone of the school, it is most useful in ensuring to some boys, at any rate, the chance of a keen game on a proper ground under proper supervision. It would not require much more effort to arrange a second or even a third division in the competition so as to give the younger boys also a chance.

The local authorities have also done valuable work in the provision of swimming baths and in offering free passes to all boys who can swim a certain length. Many schoolmasters and teachers make a great point of teaching their boys to swim, and of coaching them up for the schools swimming competition. Swimming and bathing in general is perhaps the healthiest of recreations, and no amount of effort would be wasted in organizing swimming clubs in the case of the junior boys.

All this work, however, is mainly directed to the helping of the schoolboy. Even more urgent is the need of the boy who has just started work in the factory. With him it is the Saturday afternoon that affords the only opportunity for a game. But once again the difficulty arises as to where he is to play. There are very few football grounds within a reasonable distance and available to those who cannot afford to pay much rent. For the charges for an ordinary ground are very high. £6 a year is the lowest possible price for a private field, however unsuitable for football it may be. When the

train fares and the necessary equipment are also considered, it will be seen that the chance of a game is limited to those who are lucky enough to belong to a regular boys' club, or to those who fortunately work for an employer who is willing to finance a football team of his young employees. We wish there were more such employers. A ten-pound note spent in this way would give infinite enjoyment, and would result in a healthier and keener lot of young workmen. We commend the idea to those who now have works of their own or who will on leaving school or the university enter their father's business.

A further need must be mentioned here. The boys quite naturally get very tired of only playing friendly games. Properly organized competitions for boys are urgently needed. Some competitions do exist, but they are very often quite unsatisfactory in that too little attention is paid to the spirit in which the games are played, and none at all to seeing that the age limit is kept. It is of frequent occurrence that a team of elder boys will enter for a league limited to boys of the average age of sixteen, either bringing down the average by playing two small boys of twelve, or by simple fraud! The Council of Workers among Boys in Birmingham has made a move in this direction by arranging proper competitions. Their work could well be copied in other smaller places and extended so as to include

teams of boys who are not connected with a definite brigade or club.

Football occupies the first place in a working boy's desires. If he cannot play it, he will watch it, and so off he goes to witness some league match between professional teams. Much has been said and written about the evil of large crowds watching instead of playing football. I quite agree that these professional matches are a mere perversion of the game, and that they give rise to betting, which is simply disastrous. But it is monstrously unfair to call the crowd loafers and lazy louts, when absolutely no chance is given to them of playing themselves. It is merely childish to abuse them for not doing what they cannot do. It is the same thing with the magistrate who, on fining a boy for playing football in the street, will tell him to play in the places provided for the purpose ! !

But football does not last the whole year round. The summer comes along, when the educated person thinks of cricket, lawn tennis and other quieter occupations. Now places where football can be played are impossible as cricket pitches, for the game would be dangerous, to put it in the mildest terms ! But it is also, in the boys' opinion, a very slow and uninteresting form of amusement. There are, therefore, few who even want to play this game, so that in summer a boy's Saturday afternoons are

apt to hang heavy on his hands. He will perhaps go off with one or two pals and bathe in a neighbouring canal; he may even go further afield, especially if he can afford to hire a decrepit old bicycle. Every effort should be made to try and organize country walks or bicycling clubs. They can be both popular and useful.

I must now draw attention to three other forms of amusement which are indulged in by the boys for lack of something to do.

Provided that the requisite money is forthcoming, he will very likely spend much time in the neighbouring picture palace or music hall. Much has been said and written on both sides, and I feel that it is quite impossible to enter a wholesale condemnation of these places. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that far too much money is spent by the boys on what at the best of times is but a very poor and cheap form of amusement. That I think will be admitted by everyone. It is much harder to form a clear opinion as to the effects of such entertainments upon the children. Some of the films are dangerously suggestive, while others are too utterly melodramatic to be wholesome for a small boy. I saw once, for instance, a film on which a man was pictured as about to be electrocuted. Although something sensational happened before he was actually dead, the picture of the man being tied to the chair, and his frantic struggles, were

hardly suitable for a child to watch. On the other hand, there are some films which are of a high educative value, such as Kearton's pictures of the Indian Jungle and those of the Antarctic expedition.

It is quite idle to condemn all picture palaces as being bad for children, and we should rather aim at two reforms. The first of these is that no boy under eleven years of age should be allowed to go unaccompanied, and, secondly, that a very strict censorship should be kept on the films, not only as regards their morality, but also as regards their sensationalism.

The music halls are on a different footing. I am quite clear in my mind that our cities would be infinitely better without these cheaper halls which the working boy frequents. The influence of the crowd, the suggestiveness of the performance and the spectacular appeal to his excitement or emotionalism are rotten to the very core. An occasional visit may do no harm, but the boys usually become habitués, and it is in this that the evil lies.

Perhaps the most alarming feature of the city life of to-day is the vast extent of gambling and betting. The first taste comes through the sale of the betting and other evening papers. The gambling spirit is caught and becomes a habit, quite as strong as the drinking habit. The dull monotony of the factory is partly responsible, for the boy demands some excitement in reaction. A

game of pitch and toss or a surreptitious game of nap in a dark court and doorway supply it. Betting on the result of league football matches has also grown to a formidable extent, encouraged by the football papers. It is a most serious feature of boy life to-day. It is not due to any inherent evil in the boy; it is due to the fact that he has little or nothing to occupy his time, and 'Satan finds plenty for idle hands to do.'

Another distressing occupation is the silliness with girls, leading to looseness of life, if not to direct impurity. It is a heartrending occupation to walk about the centre of Birmingham on a Saturday and Sunday night, and to witness the thousands of boys and girls ragging about and engaging in perfectly filthy conversation. This goes on in the poorer parts of the city as well, and is largely responsible for the terrifying spread of immorality. Forced marriages between quite young people are of frequent occurrence, while a hopeless laxity in the attitude shown to the other sex is the general rule. It is a disastrous state of affairs which no one can witness with equanimity.

Therefore, both from a negative as well as a positive point of view, the provision of adequate opportunities for wholesome recreation is quite indispensable. They are necessary as a counter-attraction to vicious and unsatisfactory forms of amusement; they are equally necessary in that

good and properly organized games teach the all-important lessons of playing for the side rather than for oneself and also of playing a clean, straight game. The advantage to the health of the boy is so obvious that one need not enlarge on it except to say that if exercise is necessary to a Public School boy, who lives and works in a healthy atmosphere, it must be infinitely more necessary to those who spend their days in the foetid atmosphere of a workshop and the unhealthy surroundings of their home.

There is one further form of voluntary effort that ought to be noticed. To a slum child his school holidays are not by any means an unmixed blessing. In the winter the school is very often the only warm and cheerful building that he knows. When the holidays come round, and for over a fortnight the street alone is open to him, the prospects are distinctly cheerless. At the best he mopes about, doing nothing in particular; more often he either drifts to the station entrance among the undesirable loafers in the hope of getting a bag to carry or else makes a general nuisance of himself. An effort has been made to meet this need in Birmingham for the last three years, which has proved so useful and satisfactory that I describe it in case other people in other places may follow the example. In saying this, I do not mean that we are the only ones who have adopted the plan. Both in Bristol

A WEEK-END PARTY

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

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and London similar plans have been adopted during the summer holidays.

During the week after Christmas we have arranged for what we have termed a Holiday School. One hundred and fifty children, both boys and girls, have been chosen as pupils, not because of their amenity to discipline, but because they were the most likely to get into mischief. Their parents are asked to sign a card saying that they are willing their children should attend, so as to secure their co-operation. The children are divided into classes of ten or fifteen, each class having at least two teachers.[1] Subjects are chosen which are interesting and useful. With the girls canvas work, basket-making, and dressing of dolls form the curriculum, while a wider range of subjects is supplied for the boys. In one room a gas stove is provided, and a lesson in elementary cooking is the source of infinite keenness, partly perhaps because there is a tangible and partially satisfying result. Leather work, bent iron work, basket-making, fretwork and chip-carving all claim their devotees. The two hours in the afternoon are divided into two sections, each class having two distinct occupations. The children enjoy the school immensely, as is shown by the fact that over 80 per cent. of the children did not miss at all.

We were afraid at first that the maintenance of discipline might be a difficulty. But it was a

[1] See Appendix C.

groundless fear. The children from the very start behaved excellently, though we did not, of course, maintain the rigid silence of the ordinary school-room. Quiet conversation was allowed, and was really useful in enabling the helpers to know as well as to teach their pupils. Helpers gave their services, and so, in addition to other advantages, saved us much expense. The cost of the whole school, including firing and lighting, was easily covered by £20, which can hardly be described as an excessive amount in view of its usefulness and the fund of enjoyment it provided for the helpers and the children.

I have endeavoured to describe the amusements of the boy and the many ways in which he can be given healthy recreation. To be able to enjoy life in a wholesome manner is an important lesson for all to learn. It is a hard one for the working boy, who has very little spare time and fewer occupations. Few greater services can be rendered than in supplying the necessary opportunities and in the organization of really healthy amusements.

CHAPTER V.

CHILD EMPLOYMENT.

THE main difference between the Street boy and the Public School boy lies in the fact that the former becomes a wage-earner while still at school. Of course, he has to go to school till he is thirteen or fourteen, but this does not prevent his parents using him out of school hours to gain an extra 1s. 6d. or 2s. a week. A Public School boy never thinks of earning any money till he has left school, and, in fact, does not begin to do so seriously till he is twenty-two or twenty-three years old. This is an important point, for failure to recognize it prevents a proper understanding of the son of working parents.

When we face the facts we find that over the whole area covered by the Greater Birmingham Education Committee more than 12 per cent. of the boys are engaged in some form of employment in addition to those engaged in street-trading. This does not appear at first sight to be much, but when it is remembered that in many of the schools there are

few, if any, children who are employed, it will be seen that the percentage is really much higher in the schools which are attended by the sons of the poor. There is one school, for instance, where 36 per cent. of the boys are employed, while frequently the percentage is between 20 and 30.

It will thus be seen that the number of children engaged in work is very considerable indeed, and requires careful attention. There are two considerations which I should like to emphasize at the beginning.

In the first place, it has to be remembered that this employment, usually amounting to about twenty hours in the week, is in addition to the twenty-seven and a half hours spent in school. Therefore, a very large number of children are at work for a third of the whole week. It is quite clear that this amount of labour, whether physical or mental, is far too much for a young and growing boy whose nourishment is very meagre. The inevitable result is that his powers of receptivity in the way of education are short of what they should be. It is a positive scandal that we should spend millions of money on the education of our working boys, and at the same time allow much of it to be wasted through permitting them to be unreasonably employed.

Further, it is frequently the case that a boy is engaged in work during the dinner hour and at five

o'clock, which means that very slender and hurried meals are his portion. To keep up his health and strength a boy who is engaged in heavy employment ought to receive more nourishment than others, whereas in fact he receives less.

The commonest form of employment for a boy is the running of errands for different shops. In some ways this is perhaps the most satisfactory, for, as a general rule, the pay is fairly good and the hours not too long. No doubt at Christmas time many are kept at work till very late at night, but as a rule there is not much done after eight o'clock.

A considerable number of children are engaged in assisting their mothers to sew buttons and hooks and eyes on to cards. Such work is of a sweated nature, for the wages are quite disgracefully low, and the work monotonous and long. The conditions of this form of employment have doubtless improved since Miss Olive Malvery opened the eyes of the public by her book *Baby Toilers*. But it is quite bad enough, and in one way especially that escapes attention. For the home ought to speak to the boy of rest and quiet. Certainly many homes are anything but satisfactory, but although they may be bad in many ways, yet a boy should feel that in his home he can, if he likes, get away from work and toil. But if 'home work' is done, this is impossible, as the only sitting-room in the house is turned into a workshop, and here the mother and

children are engaged in strenuous labour. This necessarily destroys any remnants of love for his home that the boy may have, for it speaks to him of work, hard, dull and badly paid. This may seem to some to be rather a far-fetched argument, but I am speaking from experience when I say that the home influence is invariably weak where home work is found.

The form of employment which has attracted considerable attention in the last year or two is that in barbers' shops. Here boys are engaged as latherers, so as to save the actual barber time and trouble. There are two special evils which this involves. In the first place, the hours are very long, particularly on a Saturday. On this day a boy engaged as a latherer will usually work from twelve to sixteen hours. Out of 522 boys engaged in lathering, 167 worked from twelve to fourteen hours, while 313 worked from fourteen to sixteen hours. Taking the whole week into consideration, we find that 129 worked from thirty to thirty-five hours, 167 from thirty-five to forty, while 104 worked over forty hours. The late hour to which the work is continued is also a serious feature. Frequently the boys are kept up to eleven and twelve o'clock at night, in spite of the law which forbids any boy under fourteen years of age to work after nine o'clock!

Further, however, these cheap barbers' shops have

a bad influence upon the boys' character, for there is a considerable amount of talk that is anything but healthy, while from a physical point of view the conditions are very bad. There is no doubt that this form of employment needs the most careful supervision and restriction. The Local Authority has the power to do it ; it only needs the will.

I turn now to the employment of boys as street traders, and I wish to deal with this somewhat fully. For it is the paper boy who is most in prominence. His shouts are loud and piercing ; he is conspicuous and ubiquitous ; and he is importunate in his demands that we should buy his papers.

By the local bye-laws any child between the ages of eleven and sixteen can obtain a licence to trade in the streets, so long as application is made by the parent in person ; with this proviso, that girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen must be in the company of a guardian when trading. The term trading includes the selling of papers, matches and wood, and singing in the streets for the purpose of gain. But no begging is allowed. The licence badge must be worn in a conspicuous place. No child may trade before six o'clock in the morning or after nine o'clock at night. Very few, however, do any trading before breakfast or at the dinner hour. The majority sell between five and nine in the evening.

So much for the nature and extent of street trading.

What of the effects on the children? Are these good or bad? I suppose that everyone with first-hand knowledge will agree that they are bad, or at any rate are not beneficial. Opinion is practically unanimous that street selling is most demoralizing to children. But in dealing with a question like this, a general conclusion is not sufficient. We must go more into detail and discover what specific evils exist. For the sake of clearness, I shall place these evils under two heads—Physical and Moral.

Let us take the *Physical* evils first—evils which are serious and which appeal forcibly to us, though not of such great importance as the other.

The most serious of these is the exposure to bad weather which a street trader has to endure. Snow and rain do not stop the supply of or the demand for evening papers. Whatever the weather may be, out into the street the boy has to go, there to loiter about, shivering with cold. This would be bad enough in any circumstances, but it is made doubly worse by the fact that few wear warm clothing. This is not always due to a lack of decent clothing, for a boy who is on the make knows perfectly well that ragged clothes are a splendid advertisement. Even, however, when the circumstances are normal and the weather fine, one has still to reckon with the long hours. Fortunately, as I said, only quite a few sell papers before school, or at dinner time. The majority trade from five

to nine in the evening or even shorter hours, but for a boy of eleven, even three hours' work, besides his five hours in school, must have a detrimental effect upon his health. No child can stand eight hours' work a day without suffering for it in the long run, especially when he has very poor and very little food to keep him going. Worst of all, however, to my mind, is the great strain on the nervous system imposed upon the traders. Not only is the actual strain of selling bad enough, but there is also the strain of having to take home so much money, under penalty of the strap. Anyone who has the slightest knowledge of boys will admit that that sort of strain has the worst possible effect upon their health.

But one may be asked whether these criticisms are supported by facts. I am not a medical man, but I think sufficient proof is forthcoming in the fact that those who are acquainted with the health of the poor unhesitatingly condemn the practice on these grounds.

Now let us turn to what I have called *Moral* evils.

I suppose that all of us will agree that one of the most important virtues to cultivate among the poor is self-respect. This ought to be kept in view in all our dealings with them. We all know the infinite harm that has been done by promiscuous charity, whether to young or old. This lack of self-respect is perhaps the worst characteristic of the poor of our cities. They seem willing to say or

do anything to secure a little extra help. Without any hesitation whatever I say that street trading encourages this vice among the children. It is not generally known, that so long as he wears a badge, a child may sing in the streets for the purpose of getting money. Surely no better education for a career of cadging could be devised.

Leaving that out of account, the child soon learns that if he can present a sufficiently pitiable appearance, he can confidently rely on getting a penny for a halfpenny paper. I daresay all of us have been offenders in this respect. Think of what this means to an impressionable child; and on that ground alone street trading stands condemned. Take a typical instance brought to light by evidence at the children's court. A boy was presented with a good suit of clothes. These he wore at home and in the club, but he had others underneath which were very ragged. Each night he took off the good ones, hiding them behind a pillar of one of the offices in the centre of the city, and putting them on again when he returned home.

But, further, and as a corollary to this loss of self-respect, I am sure that street trading tends to produce a certain restlessness and instability of character. The occupation is one of excitement, wildness and rush; it appeals on that ground to the boy, so full of spirits. He is his own master, he can do what he likes, go where he likes and work

as long as he likes, provided he makes the money required by his parents. As a result, it is found that those who have been traders for any length of time are unpunctual and quite unable to keep an engagement, or to settle down to anything which needs regularity.

It is said, of course, that this need not necessarily be attributed to street trading, but is due to their unsettled surroundings, and that just the same consequences ensue if the child is playing in the streets. This I question. Unless he has some job, a boy does not come up into the centre of the town, and it is there that the mischief is done. After all, if he is playing in the streets near home, he is within call of his parents. At any rate, there is not the additional excitement of rushing headlong with a bundle of papers anywhere and everywhere.

Loss of self-respect and instability of character are the two evil results, so far as morals are concerned, upon which I should like to lay the most emphasis. But just as serious is the tendency of street traders to lapse into gambling habits. In the evidence which was collected about street trading by children for the Poor Law Commission Report, it is remarkable how witness after witness reports this as one of the most noticeable vices connected with this sort of employment.

The reasons for this are not difficult to discover. One of the chief of them is to be found in the sporting

papers, through which the boy becomes acquainted with racing news and the possibility of making a little money by backing a winner. Here is one instance of what I mean. The other day I noticed a man buying an evening paper from a boy which he began to read before he went on. As he walked off he remarked to a friend, ' Hurrah ! I have won ten bob on that horse.' Here is another. I remember one of my boys appearing in a new pair of boots, and when I asked him how he got them, he said they were given him by a man who had made money by betting on races after receiving tips on them from him. He said a large number of men came to him for tips instead of buying sporting papers.

In such ways the boy becomes acquainted with betting, and is led on to try his own hand at it.

There is another cause for this tendency which should be mentioned. A large number of boys congregate at the central offices and distributing depots of the newspapers, with the result that boys of school age are thrown with loafers and loungers, many of whom go there solely for gambling and betting purposes, and not in order to get papers. These big chaps of nineteen or twenty arrange sweepstakes on every conceivable event, and they practically compel the smaller boys to enter for them, who in that way become initiated into a vicious habit which spells ruin to their whole character.

The last moral evil connected with street trading which I wish to mention is the opportunity afforded by it for direct dishonesty. 'The Chief Constable of Sheffield among others was asked whether any special boys' occupation led to crime, and he at once and unhesitatingly said that street selling made the boys thieves.' It is a very easy job to extract a few matches from a number of boxes and with them to fill another; nothing is easier than to say that one has no change, when a man in a hurry offers a threepenny bit for a paper; there is no danger of being detected if the boy feels inclined to keep a penny or two out of the money given to his mother. The excuse for the latter kind of dishonesty is that the parent ordinarily gives only a penny out of three shillings to the child, who, perhaps naturally, thinks that he has a right to more. These are small things, no doubt, but it is just these small things which tend to degrade the boy's standard of morals.

I think I have said sufficient to show the evils to a boy's life as a street trader.

When one turns to the question of reform, I feel I cannot do better than quote the recommendation of a thoroughly representative Committee which was appointed to enquire into the question in Birmingham.

'The Committee unanimously recommend that boys and girls up to eighteen years of age should be

entirely forbidden from trading in the streets. They are entirely agreed that this prohibition is demanded as a result of the evil consequences which follow from the practice.

'Failing entire and immediate prohibition, and pending the formation of a strong public opinion, they recommend:

'(1) That no girl under 18 years of age be allowed to trade in the street.

'(2) That no boy under 11 years of age be allowed to trade in the street.

'(3) That no boy between the ages of 14 and 18 years of age be allowed to trade in the street.

'(4) That no boy be allowed to trade in the street on any day before 4.30 p.m. or after 8 p.m. (This regulation to apply to Saturdays and holidays.)'

To return to the general question of child employment, it is advisable to try and meet two arguments which are advanced in its favour. In the first place, we are told, of course, that what the boys earn just helps to keep a widowed mother or a crippled father. From what I know of this type of boy, I do not believe that this is the case with any but a very few. Far more often are the boys sent out because the father is lazy or the mother spendthrift, or because the boy himself wants a little pocket money. Let me give one or two examples.

William B—— works nearly twenty hours in the week, earning 2s. 3d. His father earns £1 12s., his elder sister and brothers bring in an extra £1 1s. 6d. The total income is therefore £2 15s. 9d., out of which 6s. 6d. goes in rent. There are two small boys younger than William.

Frank P——, earning 2s. a week, is the son of a police sergeant, who, with two elder sons, brings in £3 2s.

Herbert B—— works for twenty-five hours for 2s. when the *net* income of the family is £3 7s. It is true there are six young children, but even so, it can hardly be described as a necessitous family.

Perhaps the most flagrant case is that of Albert M——, whose father has two fish shops. Albert, though only nine years old, is kept at work for fifty-six hours. The father admits that he takes £11 a week in one of the shops.

I am perfectly convinced that no hardship whatever would be entailed if child labour were prohibited or closely restricted by law. After all, the widowed mother and the crippled father can always get help from the parish.

Again, people will tell us that the boy is better occupied in this way than in loafing about the streets. There is a considerable amount of truth in this, and I think many would be disposed to allow employment which was very strictly limited and supervised. But even so, it must be borne in mind

that it is only a makeshift policy and that the ideal is complete prohibition.

It is true, therefore, that we should insist on the Local Authorities using the powers that were given to them under the Employment of Children Act, 1903, by which law it is also utterly illegal for any child to be engaged after nine o'clock at night. The law is perfectly explicit on this point, although it is flagrantly broken. Other cities, such as Nottingham, have taken strong steps in forbidding boys to be employed as lather boys or in selling programmes in a theatre, etc., while the hours which boys may work are very limited. I earnestly hope that a law will be passed which will not leave the matter open, but will insist on a heavy curtailment all over the country.

For the employment of schoolboys is one of extreme danger to their education and welfare. It is imperative that the public conscience should be stirred, and that even if it is inexpedient to forbid it altogether, it shall be so strictly limited and supervised that it is robbed of its most dangerous features.

CHAPTER VI.

BOY LABOUR.

On his fourteenth birthday, the boy leaves the Elementary School and straightway seeks employment. He does not wait till the term is over, nor even to the end of the week, but immediately demands a character from his headmaster and leaves. Armed with this and indomitable cheek, he looks about him for a job.

There are many openings for him. It is always easy for him to get a place after leaving school, for school has smartened him to a marked degree, and as a monitor in the seventh standard, he has learned to take a certain measure of responsibility. In Birmingham it is even easier than in other places, as in a manufacturing city crowds of boys are needed to feed the iron monsters of machinery. There is also an endless supply of little factories, for the trade of the Midland Metropolis is to a considerable extent carried on by small firms, with only a few hands. Even in some obscure court or yard one can find a small 'stamping' or 'polishing' firm.

All these firms require a boy, and so the demand is enormous.

He can therefore easily secure a job, but what will it be? In his choice lies the crisis of his life, and it is in this most of all that he needs a guidance, which more often than not he fails to get.

There are three types of employment into which he may enter, varying intensely both in present pay and in future prospects. This difference is not recognized by the majority of boys, for like their parents they are amazingly short-sighted. But it is none the less real, and to fail to understand it, is disastrous. It must, however, be borne in mind that although the line of distinction is very clear so far as trades in general are concerned, it is very difficult to speak definitely about particular firms. The type of employment that is offered to boys by a certain firm may be bad in itself and may lead directly to nothing. But the firm may be willing to meet that difficulty itself and to secure that the boy is transferred to another branch of their work of a more satisfactory nature. Therefore, trades in general may be distinguished and classified with a fair amount of certainty. Particular firms may, however, and in many cases do, form an exception to the general rule.

In the first place, then, there are many jobs which are better performed by a boy than by a man, at a smaller cost. The boy is quick and sharp,

and is needed to carry messages. In Birmingham, where everything is very concentrated geographically, and where the leading offices are close together, it is infinitely quicker to despatch a note by the hand of a boy than to send it through the post. Offices, therefore, require his services, for which they pay handsome wages. Shops must have the parcels of the customers delivered by a youngster. Hotels and restaurants require a boy in uniform to open the doors, which their lordly patrons are too lazy to open for themselves. The railway luggage cart requires a boy to dangle his legs behind so as to see that parcels are not stolen unawares.

Street trading is also an occupation that has many attractions for a quick and lively boy. He rushes hither and thither with an early edition of the evening paper, thankful that he is free from the weariness of school, and afraid of the dull slow life at a factory bench. It is a glorious time for such a boy, and by no means regarded with dismay by his parents. For he earns his money daily instead of weekly, a most important feature of the work, as it enables him to get the price of a ticket to a music hall on other days besides a Saturday, while it is invaluable to a spendthrift mother.

All these kinds of work are full of life and excitement, and are thus wonderfully attractive to the boy. He is free, with all the charm of freedom on the streets. To carry a message, threading his

way through the crowded thoroughfares of a busy city, is infinitely more attractive than the dull monotony of feeding a machine. Above all, he gets good pay! He may reasonably hope to get 7s. a week or more, a sum that means a lot to a mother struggling to make both ends meet. For this reason above all others, the work is popular and has far too many recruits. It is hard to condemn the boy, still less the parents, who have had a terrible pinch to feed the hungry schoolboy, and to whom the 7s. even without prospects is more satisfactory than 5s. with prospects. But it is bad, desperately bad. The wages increase steadily till the age of sixteen or seventeen, and then cease. For the boy asks for a man's wages and is refused, and is forced to make way for another boy at a lower wage. So it goes on in a never-ending cycle. Boy after boy, bright and quick at the start, is hurled on to the street without a trade, undisciplined, and unaccustomed to factory life. Unskilled casual labour is his only lot, unless it be the prison or the workhouse.

Another kind of employment can be chosen; and that is work of an unskilled character in a factory. It is hard to generalize on this type of work, for there are innumerable varieties. Like the previous class, it may land a boy into the gutter at seventeen, or it may lead him to a permanent berth, with a pension attached. It is the commonest type of work, and into it fifty or sixty per cent. of

our schoolboys may drift. Innumerable jobs await them, and it is hard to speak with confidence as to their relative merits, for so much depends upon the individual firm and the individual master. A large number of boys will, if they are regular and punctual, find in such a factory permanent employment, but it is quite unskilled and unsatisfactory in many ways. For it is monotonous beyond description. A boy will find himself condemned to do the same piece of work in the same way, at the same hours, and in the same place for many weeks together. One day is like another ; no change, and no demand for initiative or intelligence.

What wonder is it if, when working hours are over, he suffers from a violent reaction, expressing itself in noise, or in being a general nuisance to all around. He must let off steam and give vent to his pent-up feelings. If no wholesome outlet is allowed him, he will find one in a surreptitious game of pitch and toss, in ' swanking ' with the girls along the brightly lit streets, or in offering caustic witticisms from the gallery of the music hall.

In addition to the monotony it is work that kills ambition. Even if he is lucky enough to get taken on by a firm who will keep him through his life, he will remain an unskilled labourer to the end, earning it may be 30s. or 40s. if he is lucky, but certainly not more. He knows how to make one screw of a motor car perfectly, but the other parts he never

sees; if by any chance that piece ceases to be used and is superseded by new ideas, he will probably find himself one of the unemployed. It is an enormous loss to his welfare that this should be the case. For ambition is badly needed by the poor. Their lives are dull and tedious, and they look for nothing beyond their daily needs. Such a state of low content marks their whole nature. After two or three years of this work they have no desire to be any better than their fathers. At school they may dream dreams, and build castles in the air; two years' work in a factory destroys all these wholesome imaginations and leaves them mere machines, undesirous to rise to higher places in their homes or in their character.

Further, it is heavy work, and one that tires him out in a most unhealthy way. Look at the seventh standard boys in any Council School, and a stranger will often be struck by their appearance. Weaklings no doubt there are, and in too large a number; but on the whole they are a healthy lot. Watch these boys for a year or two and what a change comes over them! The colour leaves their cheeks; a slouch succeeds the sprightly active run, their sharpness is deadened into a hopeless sleep! Generation after generation of healthy youngsters grow up to be seedy louts. It is a terrible decay from a purely physical point of view.

It is not only, however, a strain upon his health.

For after working from seven in the morning till six or seven o'clock at night, he is much too tired out to benefit from any continuation class, unless it is surpassingly attractive. He can make a noise and enjoy a bout at boxing in a club ; but such energy is entirely different from what is needed at the evening class. Reformers tell us that we must at all costs send the boy to an evening school. It is no use ; he can't learn anything if he goes. Before advance can be made in this direction his working hours will have to be reduced.

Such work, then, is monotonous and hard without any stimulus to ambition. But it is not wholly bad, for it is quite fairly paid work, bringing, it may be, six or seven shillings a week at the start. It may be permanent, if the boy can be induced to be regular, and if the kind of trade is staple and unaffected to any great extent by the passing whims and fashions of society.

Even more, it depends upon the employer, and it is just because of this that the right kind of Public School boy is important. A large number of old Public School men have either built up a business of their own or have inherited one. To them an unequalled opportunity offers itself of doing much permanent good to their employees. It is reasonable to hope that future generations will surpass the present, not in launching any great philanthropic organizations, but in seeing that the boys in their

firms are not reduced to machines by the monotony of their work, in securing shortened hours of work for attendance at an evening class, and by trying to kindle into flame the healthy ambition of the boy.

We turn to the third type of employment. There still remain a few openings for really skilled employment. They are few and far between, partly owing to the growth of machinery, but still more to the specialization and detailed subdivision of all work. Few men or boys ever learn the whole of one trade. They will learn a part. So that skilled men are rarely needed except in one or two trades. Thus the apprenticeship system is rapidly dying out, except in a few cases. Printing, jewellery and engineering are among the few remaining exceptions. A premium is very seldom paid, and only a loose form of indenture binds the boy. There are indeed openings which lead to a career of skilled employment, offering endless possibilities, but few of the poorer boys can take them, for in addition to their scarcity, not many members of an elementary school are mentally equipped for such work. It must be remembered that the boy of the slums is not of the best. His upbringing is against his full development, and although he may reach the seventh standard, that is not necessarily a proof of capacity in work.

There is further the financial difficulty which prohibits for many boys an entrance into skilled

employment. These jobs are but poorly paid, 4s. 6d. or 5s. being the average earnings. There is a vast difference between 4s. 6d. and 7s., and the fierce stress makes the demand for the bigger wage a reasonable one. There are many boys, whose capacity is really great, who are condemned to a life of unskilled labour for the sake of the extra two or three shillings. It is therefore increasingly difficult to make boys enter skilled employment, even if an opportunity for doing so occurs.

These are the three openings to the boy on his fourteenth birthday. Which will he take? Will he take the higher wage and tread the road which leads to poverty or prison? Will he enter an unskilled job in the neighbouring factory, which will reduce him to a machine-like mediocrity or a decent livelihood? Will he learn a trade, and, surviving the strain involved in his early years, rise to a position of usefulness?

Which is it to be? That is the vital question, the answer to which will make or mar the hopeful boy. There are many difficulties which present themselves, as his choice is affected by forces that are most powerful, though indiscriminating.

For, in the first place, there is the chronic difficulty of cash. His circumstances are such that the highest paid work, which is invariably the worst, is by far the most attractive. This we have dealt with previously, so we need not enlarge upon it, except

to repeat that it accounts for more wasted human life than any other.

The ignorance and lack of foresight shown by his parents are immense. There are many parents, really anxious to see their sons do well and indeed to help them, but unable to do so from sheer ignorance. To them one job is the same as another, and their advice is largely based upon what others do. For instance, one boy in a court may elect to become a 'dogger-up.' The other boys in the court follow suit, because it is the custom to do so. In this, as in other things, they cannot look beyond the present. 7s. is 7s; let the future take care of itself. They have no one to guide or advise them, and the boy seldom appeals of his own accord to his schoolmaster.

This is a serious handicap to a right choice, for all questions of his physical health and individual capacity are ignored. He and his parents hear that Tom Smith is making 6s. a week at stamping; therefore he can do the same, quite regardless of whether his health can stand it or whether he is not capable of taking skilled employment. The result is drift; he drifts into any sort of job; a gust of temper or windy words whirl him out of it; once again he drifts into another job. It is essential that this drift should be arrested, and that definite help and advice should be given him on leaving school.

There are various people ready to hand who are able to give that advice; it is only necessary to bring them together, and from their knowledge to form a sound judgment. There is the schoolmaster, who knows the boy well, and has watched his development through the eight or nine years that he has been at school. Intimate knowledge of the boy's character and peculiarities he may not have, but he will know his general capacity and particular bent of mind. Moreover, he has the official report upon his health, from which he can tell whether it is heavy or light, indoor or outdoor work for which the boy is physically fit.

Next to the schoolmaster, there stands the voluntary worker. An increasing number of school children are now connected with some Sunday School or Club, or other voluntary organization. For instance, in December, 1913, 68 per cent. of the children leaving school in Birmingham were reported by the school teachers as being in touch with some social or religious organization. Whoever is responsible for the boy in such a way can render invaluable advice. For he is more likely to know the actual character of the boy himself, while he knows, too, the home conditions, and how great the pressure of poverty is at home. Both kinds of knowledge are invaluable, for the character of the boy must be taken into account in the choice. It is quite useless, for instance, to send a shifty and dishonest boy into

a jeweller's shop; work free from such temptation must be found for him. It is obvious, too, that a knowledge of the home is essential. It is the helper who can tell whether the family exchequer can allow the boy to be content with a lower wage; it is he, too, who can bring influence upon the parents, with whom the ultimate decision must rest.

The Labour Exchange official completes the list. He is able to advise as to the prospects that any particular trade affords and can tell what openings exist. He supplies what no other person can, a detailed knowledge of the stability, permanence and hopefulness of a particular trade or firm.

These three sets of people can offer sound advice, for they regard the question from entirely different points of view. Though as individuals their advice may not be infallible, yet collectively and as a body they can supplement each other, and their united opinion will probably secure that a round peg is fitted into a round hole.

Thus comes the idea of the system of After Care Committees, or Juvenile Advisory Committees, which many towns are adopting or have adopted. These Committees are composed of school teachers, voluntary workers, and the responsible authority of the Labour Exchange. Every child is brought up before the Committee connected with his school three months before he leaves for work. The advice is tendered from the different quarters mentioned,

and the parent is thus assisted to a wise decision. The Exchange will then look out for a suitable job, so that a boy on leaving school is not turned adrift haphazard, but leaves to go direct to some employment. If by any chance he falls out of employment, it is to this Committee that he will turn for advice and help.

Important and essential as the choice of work must be, the battle is not over when it is made. For the boy must be kept at that work, and this is not by any means an easy job. It is quite extraordinary how very irregular these working boys are. It will be frequently found that a boy may have as many as five or six different kinds of work before he is sixteen years of age. It is seldom that a boy is found to keep the job that he took on leaving school. This chopping and changing is disastrous; for it not only leaves a boy 'jack of all trades and good at none,' but it has a demoralizing effect upon his character. The reasons for it are, however, obvious, and could be overcome without much difficulty.

It must be remembered that a boy on leaving school becomes a free man; at any rate, in his own eyes he is. He is exempt from the discipline of school, and there is no attendance officer to compel regularity. His position, too, at home is changed. While at school he was a heavy drag upon the family resources; as a working boy he is an impor-

tant asset, for his weekly wages, minus 6d. pocket money, are paid into the family exchequer. Therefore he must be treated with respect, and his dignity must not be offended by abuse or the infliction of the strap! For there is always room for him in the doss-house round the corner, or at the home of a neighbouring friend. The result is the growth of a strong spirit of independence, restive under restraint and unwilling to submit to any discipline. So trouble is bound to arise in a factory, where discipline is necessary. He may, perhaps, be rather clumsy or a trifle insolent; the foreman naturally expostulates in no mild manner; the boy resents his action, and he leaves in a temper. His excuse to the outside world is that he is not going 'to be shouted at like that by a blooming gaffer.' Off he goes to another factory, where the same thing most probably takes place.

In his early years, at any rate, he is ambitious so far as wages are concerned. He may start at 6s. a week. In a very short time he will ask for a rise and get the sack, or else he hears that Bill is getting 7s. at the factory up the road, and Bill has promised to get him a job there. Off he goes, despite the change of work, which means that his previous experience and learning is merely wasted.

Both these difficulties would be minimized immensely, were it not that, in the interval that the change involves, he can always fall back upon paper

selling in the streets. In that occupation he can be moderately sure of earning 9s. a week, and more if the details of a thrilling murder fill the evening papers. This money he can earn without keeping regular hours, and free from the eagle eye of a watchful foreman. Stop this kind of work, and the risk of being without any means of earning anything would help to keep him at his job.

For these reasons he tends to become most irregular and to drift incessantly from job to job.

How is it possible to stop this drift? A great deal can be done by abolishing street trading till the age of nineteen or twenty. But still more through the members of the After-Care Committee of his school. Each boy should be definitely attached to some man who can keep an eye upon him, and by word of friendly counsel or reproof restrain the boy's sense of independence. When he leaves the factory in a fit of temper with the gaffer, it is possible for the helper to reduce the boy to a saner state of mind and to persuade the foreman to take him back. Here is a splendid work for many men who would like to help the working boy, and yet cannot manage the long hours entailed by club-work. One wishes that every old Public School boy could adopt some two or three boys in this way. For their work would be invaluable.

There is, in conclusion, one word that I wish to say about the employment of boys as golf caddies.

It is a type of work that stands apart from the ordinary industrial life, and so has attracted a considerable amount of public attention. There are types of boy labour which are a great deal worse, both in prospects and conditions, than that of carrying golf clubs, making a tee or marking a ball, and I am not willing to admit that it is an unmitigated evil. I am only speaking of the golf clubs around Birmingham, but there, at any rate, comparatively few boys over fourteen are employed, and the majority of them have in the past secured good situations through the golfers, who usually have employed them. The work is a healthy one, for even a damp field in foggy weather is healthier than the foetid atmosphere of a factory or workshop. Golfers too, for the most part, realize their responsibilities and take a personal interest in the boys. It is quite idle for men to say (as a schoolmaster once said) that ' a boy is better dead than carrying clubs.' It is certainly no worse than many other occupations which pass unnoticed, while it has great advantages.

In spite of this, however, I am forced to admit that all is not well with the golf caddies, and for two or three reasons. In the first place it is a loafing life, for in the middle of the week during winter and for many days in the summer the boy gets little or no employment. No golfers are about, and the boys are left to occupy their time as best they can.

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Then, again, it cannot be denied that it is best for a boy to enter regular and permanent work as soon as he leaves school, and the work of carrying clubs is essentially a boy's work and does not pay well enough for a man, while in itself it does not help a boy in any permanent direction.

I am inclined to think that in the Midlands, at any rate, it is a question for individual golfers to deal with. I doubt whether any organization can be devised to meet the difficulties, whilst if each golfer felt that it was his bounden duty to secure employment for the boy who usually caddied for him, much of the difficulty would be removed. I think also that the evils of loafing could be easily met either by the provision of a carpenter's shop, or even only a few games, or still better by the employment of the boys on the course in raking or digging bunkers, rolling greens, re-turfing divot marks and such-like simple jobs. It may be a foolish suggestion, but I am inclined to think that there are many slum boys who might be set up for life from a health point of view by acting as a golf caddie for a year or two before entering factory life.

Some people who are not golfers and so do not understand the duties of a caddie, tell us that no man ought to need a boy to carry his clubs, and that they ought to carry them themselves, while others inform us that men will do as well. My first answer to such people is that they should take up golf

seriously for a year, and that if they do they will easily understand how indispensable a factor in the enjoyment of the game is the boy who not only carries the clubs, but is keen on his master's success, and able to offer valuable advice as to the right club to use. It is certainly not conducive to sound and steady playing if the golfer has his mind divided in trying to hit the ball and in watching where it goes; such a division of attention usually ends in an ignominious 'top' or 'fluff' into the nearest bunker!

The best feature, however, of this problem is that golfers are awake to their responsibility, and the Report of a Committee of Birmingham golfers who enquired into the actual numbers, wages, and prospects of the local caddies gives suggestions for reform.

Whatever the employment may be, however, all citizens must feel that a heavy responsibility is laid upon them in seeing that the costly education expended on a boy is not entirely wasted by his future occupation. Much can be done by proper organization and regulation of conditions and hours. But much more still can be accomplished by men who will assist the boy to make the choice, who will try to keep him regular at work, and who will always, both in trade and pleasure, realize their responsibility as regards the industrial future of any boy with whom they are thrown into contact.

CHAPTER VII.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

It is somewhat difficult to find a suitable name by which to classify those boys who, for one reason or another, find themselves in the Police Court. They are not necessarily criminals ; many of their offences are very trivial, and if committed by a Public School boy would be kept the secret of his house master. So I have chosen the official name used for boys under sixteen years of age, although I class together with them those older than this.

It is important that at the outset we should have clear in our minds some of the causes to which can be attributed many of the offences of the working boy.

The main cause, no doubt, is the laxity of the discipline at home. As I have tried to point out before, the boy receives very little training or attention at home, since the parents are sometimes wilfully neglectful, though more often they are merely indifferent and ignorant. The boy is left very much to himself, and it is hardly surprising

if he gets into trouble. Very often, therefore, the parents are really responsible for the boy's wrong-doing ; he suffers from their neglect.

Again, he has much spare time which, for lack of other accommodation, he is forced to spend upon the streets, and it would be a miracle if a boy who has no healthy outlet for his superfluous energy did not make himself a general nuisance. He plays football in the street, which is an offence against the bye-law ; he discovers from selling papers that money can be won by betting ; he finds an outlet for his desire for excitement in playing a clandestine game of pitch and toss. He has nothing with which to pass away the time, and so finds himself in conflict with the police.

Sometimes it is his physical health which is responsible. We are told that the health has a direct bearing upon a boy's character, and certainly those who are feeble-minded are almost invariably weak in character, with little or no conception of the difference between right and wrong. The latter, however, are a small minority, and should be treated as feeble-minded, and given separate treatment in a special institution.

From a considerable acquaintance and friendship with many Juvenile Offenders, I am quite convinced that the majority are fully capable of becoming efficient, honest and useful citizens. They suffer from no inherent criminal tendencies. Their energies

have been misdirected through lack of discipline at home, and for lack of some healthy and useful outlet. Let me give an example. A boy not very long ago stole the key of the school from the caretaker. With it he locked all the doors into the school and then dropped it down a neighbouring drain. Great was the annoyance next morning when the caretaker found himself unable to get it. It was a mischievous thing to do, no doubt, but he at any rate showed remarkable ingenuity, and stood to gain nothing for himself except the pleasure of baffling his schoolmaster. It was a case of misdirected energy, and I am quite sure that this is the chief reason for the majority of the offences committed by the younger boys.

The State has taken this fact into consideration, and has arranged that all boys under the age of sixteen may be tried at a special Children's Court, from which the ordinary public is excluded, and at which the methods of procedure are somewhat different. The dock, for instance, is never used, and social workers are allowed to be present and speak for a child. In passing, I should like to express my opinion that this plan should be extended so as to include boys up to the age of twenty-one. They are much the same as those of sixteen, in that their offences are more due to stupidity and lack of discipline than to any inherent evil tendencies. This might mean a division of the work of the court

into two sections, schoolboys being tried at the one and those between fourteen and eighteen at another. I put forward this proposal, not only because the treatment of boys of seventeen and eighteen should be the same as those under sixteen, but also because the privacy and the informality of the proceedings are just as important for them as for the younger ones.

Further, I would suggest that special Magistrates having a knowledge of boys should be appointed to sit at these courts. Birmingham is fortunate in having one or two Magistrates who do thoroughly understand the work, and deal with the boys in a way that the latter can appreciate. This is not always the case, as I shall point out later.

It would be well also if some of the archaic legal expressions could be translated into the 'vulgar' tongue. Sometimes a boy is bound over, and the phraseology used in such a case is entirely unintelligible to both the parent and the child. They have not the faintest conception of what the Magistrate's Clerk is talking about! It very often happens, too, that the boy is not always spoken to in a way that puts him at his ease. I do not for a moment suggest that the proceedings should be too free and easy; far from it. Let me explain what I mean in detail. When the policeman or witness have given their evidence, the boy is asked whether he would like to cross-examine them. He imagines that this is

his chance of putting his side of the case, and so promptly starts off with his explanation. He is very often stopped in quite an unnecessarily abrupt manner, as the particular moment for his defence has not arrived. The boy gets 'rattled,' and when the proper time does come, is simply unable to put his case clearly. I have known many instances in which this has happened, and it has always seemed to me to be a very unnecessary formality. It is most important for the sake of justice that the boy should be able to put his case clearly, and any abruptness on the part of the officials often throws him off his balance and makes it almost impossible for him to do so.

We now turn to the punishments which the Magistrates have the power to inflict. Here we must, for the sake of clearness, deal separately with those for boys over sixteen and those for boys under that age. Let us take the former class first.

The very large number of the offences by these boys are against the bye-laws, *i.e.* loafing, jostling, obstructing, playing football in the street, and so on. The Magistrates, for these offences, can either inflict a fine, or imprison, or put the boy on probation.

With small offences there is no doubt that the fine is the simplest and the best, so long as one essential condition is made. This is, that where the fines cannot be paid on the spot, time for payment is always allowed. This is essential. For only the

other day two boys of seventeen and eighteen found themselves in prison for seven days for playing football in the street, through their inability to pay the fine. It is unnecessary to point out how positively harmful that was to the boys. Much more attention should be paid to this than is the case at present. I know of very many boys who have served a sentence of seven days' hard labour because the money for the fine was not forthcoming on the actual day.

The Home Office has repeatedly issued instructions on the urgency of allowing extension of time, and a bill enforcing this has been promised. We are told that there is a difficulty in that many would use this extension of time in changing their abode and so avoiding payment. I very much doubt whether the number of such cases would be at all appreciable, and even if one or two did escape payment, the harm would be very much less than that caused by commitment to prison.

The Magistrates have also the power of placing a boy on probation, which means that he is placed under the care and supervision of either some policeman told off for probation work, or a social worker. Many of the offences, while not being serious when taken by themselves, are often signs of a disordered and undisciplined life. Many of these elder Juvenile Offenders are, for instance, casual inhabitants at some cheap and unsatisfactory

lodging-house. They are in need of strong influence exerted by one who will find them work and suitable lodgings.

But it should be made quite clear that, if the boy is brought up for any offence during his time for probation, he will be severely dealt with. This should even be the case if he offends after his probation is over, for he has been given a chance, and if he refuses to take warning, then severe punishment should be inflicted. I know of one boy, for instance, who was put on probation for being concerned in a case of stealing. During that period he was given seven days' hard labour for jostling, the Magistrates ignoring the fact that he was then on probation. Although his career has been one of successive misdemeanours, he has never been really seriously punished. There is a very real danger that probation will lose its force unless severe punishment, *e.g.* imprisonment for three months, follows any breach or offence during the specified period.

Then we come to the punishment of imprisonment with hard labour. There is no doubt that the boy is very seriously alarmed at this punishment for the first or even the second short sentence. But in this, as in other things, familiarity breeds contempt. I heard of a case the other day of a boy who had done eighteen sentences of a week or fortnight, in one year. Prison would present few terrors to him after that. But a sentence of three months, or even

a month, is a different matter, and is cordially disliked by a youthful offender. It is important, therefore, that in cases of a repeated offence, or where probation has been broken, a severe sentence should be inflicted, or that the boy should be committed to some Borstal Institution, which is educational in character.

Let me add a few words here about the importance of the work of what is called the Borstal Committee, which is in existence at all prisons, and the function of which is to advise, and to help in securing work for any boy leaving prison. The members of this Committee are voluntary workers, and most valuable work can be rendered by them, not only in obtaining work for the boys, but even more by putting them in touch with some social organization in which they will be brought under healthy and invigorating influences.

The main need, then, with these elder Juvenile Offenders, is that their past record and their whole condition of life should be taken into account, and that no boy should carelessly be punished without these particulars being very fully considered.

We now turn to the case of those boys who are under sixteen, and are tried in the special Children's Court. It should, however, be noted at the outset that in cases tried there the child is not always even the ostensible defendant. Any child, for instance, who, in the opinion of the Education

Authority, is not under proper control is brought up before the court in order that he may be formally committed to an industrial school. But in all cases the parents are held responsible for the boy's offence, in that one of them is summoned to attend the court with the children.

The smaller offences against the bye-laws are usually punished by a fine. Criticisms are sometimes made that this punishment falls upon the parent, not on the child. That is perfectly true, but although in the court the parent will assert that their son is the model of virtue and 'never gives no trouble,' a different tale is told at home, and the son 'cops out' in a merciless manner.

The humanitarian ideas, which are so much the fashion at the present time, have made Magistrates unwilling to inflict the ancient method of correction, that of whipping. A boy under fourteen years of age may for certain offences be ordered to be birched. This is done by a police officer in private, though the parent may, if he so desire, be present. A sharp punishment such as this is very often excellent, especially if the boy comes from a fairly respectable home, when his offence is very likely due to an outburst of spirits. It is, however, dangerous in the extreme if used promiscuously. I entirely agree with the suggestion that the benefit of probation would be increased if, for serious offences, a boy could be birched, and then put upon probation.

The reason for this suggestion is that there is a danger lest a boy should think lightly of probation and so be unconvinced of the seriousness of his offence. At present this is impossible, and it might be wise for this permission to be granted, especially if the Magistrates were men who had a knowledge of boys.

There is no doubt whatever that probation is the effective way of dealing with the majority of the boys, whose homes are for the most part bad, and who do need some strong influence. The probation officers are usually men who have real sympathy with the boys, and in Birmingham at any rate they are tireless in their work. It is no small credit to them that parents should ask, as I have heard them do, that the probation officer should be allowed to continue his visits to the home even though the probation period is over.

In connection with this, I think it might be useful to draw attention to the most useful effort that has been made in connection with the children's court at Birmingham. At the request of the Magistrates, a representative of the Birmingham Street Children's Union informs the Parochial Clergy of all children who claim to be nominally attached to the Church, and who are put on probation. This has secured that the work of the probation officer is supplemented by those who can persuade the child to join some social or religious

organization. The Roman Catholics look after their boys in the same way, and find it equally useful. It is a work that other towns would do well to copy.

But in addition to these punishments, the Magistrates may commit a boy to an Industrial or Reformatory School. To the former schools are sent boys who are not under proper control, who persistently refuse to attend school, or who have committed some offence of a criminal nature, so long as they are not over fourteen years of age. They are committed to an Industrial School till they are sixteen years of age. Boys over fourteen and under sixteen are committed to a Reformatory for serious offences until they are eighteen.

Before attempting to describe the work of these schools, I should like to express my conviction that such commitment should only be ordered when it has been clearly proved that either the home is utterly bad, involving a complete lack of proper parental control, or that the boy is so bad that nothing but three or more years of strict discipline will bring him to his right mind. There is too great a readiness to send a boy away from his home, a measure which ought to be considered an exceptional method of treatment. An indifferent home is, to my mind, more likely to equip a boy for his life's work than any institutional treatment. For the schools are not quite all that could be desired,

and at the best they must be institutional in character. Many of them are, it is true, doing exceptionally good work, and deserve fuller recognition from the public than they get at present.

It must be remembered that the children who are committed to these schools are capable of becoming first-rate citizens. They are not bad by nature; but they have been miserably neglected at home. Let me give, as an example, the case of Ted L——. His mother was a very weak character, while his father neglected him entirely. Ted was continually getting out of hand and into trouble, simply from excess of spirits. He found himself sent off to a Reformatory, and I lost sight of him for some time. A short time ago, he came to see me in the smart uniform of the Royal Artillery. He has done amazingly well, and has the makings of a first-rate man. What a jolly hour we spent recalling his previous pranks!

The function of the school is, therefore, not only the suppression of vice but also the development of virtue, and the direction of the boy's natural energies into useful and wholesome channels.

In this lies the solution to the very vexed question of the discipline in these schools. There is no doubt that in some of them discipline often becomes a regular fetish, and the boy's individual need is lost sight of in the desire to create a tone. In such schools we find an excessive and cruel amount of

caning and birching used to reduce the boys to a uniform standard. Far better is it to sacrifice mere smartness to the development and encouragement of individual capacity by allowing them a certain amount of freedom of action, if not of actual responsibility for the behaviour of their fellows.

I have known many old Industrial School boys, and I am bound to say that though they may be outwardly respectable and moderately efficient workmen, they are woefully lacking in any real strength of character or initiative. That part of the work of the schools which most needs attention is the training of the boy to stand on his own feet, by giving him a certain amount of independence of action.

The extent to which this can be done depends upon the personnel of the staff, for it is upon the superintendent and the teachers that the burden lies. Here, as elsewhere, it is character of the master that is the chief factor, and we should insist that the best men are secured for the work.

The industrial training given in the schools usually takes the form of farming, bootmaking and tailoring. There is no question that, taking the schools as a whole, the boys are given an excellent start in life, and that the majority of them take full advantage of it. Of course, there are failures; it would be foolish to expect otherwise, considering the type of boy. But they are comparatively few and far

between, and if in addition to the industrial training more attention were paid to the strengthening of character and the development of the spirit of independence and initiative, there would be very little to criticize in the work of the schools.

There is one danger, and that is, that the boy on his discharge is liable to suffer for a while from a reaction against the strict discipline of the school. It is therefore well that, so far as possible, they should be sent to some boy's home where they can taste their new-found liberty under a discipline which is less rigid than that of the school. But this would not be possible with all the boys, and so the greatest care should be taken in seeing that the boy is put into touch with some organization ; at any rate, strict enquiries as to the place where he is going to should be made. This is not always done. Jack M——, for instance, was sent to a Welsh farm on his discharge on licence. His brother in Birmingham applied for permission to have the boy living with him. No enquiries were made before this permission was granted, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I could even find the boy, for he had changed his address five times between August and November. I found the home entirely unsatisfactory and the boy in disgraceful work. It would be wise if every city could have a Central After-Care Committee for such boys, through which all placements could be made,

and by the members of which the supervision of the boy and his employment could be done. It has worked with success in Birmingham, and though many schools have not yet used its services, those which have done so have expressed their appreciation of its work.

Let me end, as I began, by repeating with all the emphasis that I can that the youthful offender is not necessarily a criminal by nature, and in the large majority of cases is capable of becoming a really useful and serviceable member of the community so long as he is brought under proper control and influence. It is the work of the Children's Police Court and the Certified Schools to secure these for him in the most efficient manner and not merely to punish him.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW TO HELP THE BOY.

How can we help the working boy and his younger brother? What assistance does he really need, which is not extended to him at present? That is the problem that we must face, regardless of the consequences to our money and our time that the answer may entail. For we have seen that this boy is full of possibilities for good and evil. He is at the start no mere machine, or parcel of flesh and bones. He is a very lively creature with boundless resources of human energy and initiative at his command. He possesses a distinct individuality peculiar to himself. Let me repeat again that there is no such person as the ordinary working boy. Each of them is quite out of the common, with abilities and weaknesses of his own.

At present much is being done for him, as we have already noticed. From his earliest childhood he is protected by law from many things that are obviously bad and detrimental to his welfare. The State has begun to realize its responsibility towards him,

and by legislation has gone a long way in mitigating the evils and in removing the obstacles that beset his path. He receives an expensive education; he is not allowed to work out of school more than a certain time, and then only under certain conditions and regulations. If he gets into trouble, and in excess of larking breaks some law, there is a special police court to correct him and to restore him to better ways. His labour is supervised, and a careful eye is kept upon the conditions under which he works. His health is attended to at school, and any weakness or infirmity is dealt with in its early stages. Much is being done, and we are thankful for it. But all this help, advice and restraint, suffer from one defect. It is organization, and as such must tend to deal with the boy as one of a class rather than as an individual requiring individual treatment.

Indispensable and valuable, therefore, as this work is, it does not meet a most pressing need. For the boy is a boy, and must be dealt with as such. For the Englishman, both by temperament and nature, hates and loathes with all his heart any attempt to organize his life. Such attempts are censured as interfering with individual liabilities, or are dubbed 'grandmotherly legislation.' This feeling is no doubt pushed too far sometimes, as legislation of a protective character is essential. We do, however, need continual reminders that human character cannot be made by any bye-law or Act of Parliament.

Individual capacity and ability will not be dragged out by any philanthropic or educational organization. They can only be permanently developed by personal training. This is fully recognized at our Public Schools and Universities. The son of wealthy parents receives an immense amount of individual attention from his parents and his masters. His essays are corrected and his mistakes explained to him personally; his peculiarities of temperament are noted, and he is encouraged or corrected accordingly. No such thing happens with the working boy or his younger brother, who are treated as members of a class. This is especially serious, for their life is so infinitely complex and full of surprises. Many influences are at work upon their character and temperament, and each boy as a result possesses many traits. It is peculiarly important, then, that he should receive individual attention.

But where is he to receive it from? Who is there to render him that help? In the majority of cases he does not get it at the home. He seldom sees his father, who would be likely to understand him, as there is no room for him when his father is at home. The mother very often tries to do her best, but she is harassed in all directions, by the cramped conditions of the home, the noise of the children, the dust and dirt of the city streets, and the incessant difficulty of making both ends meet. It is not surprising if she neglects to pay attention to her

boy, and adopts the policy of *laissez faire*. Even if she does make an effort, she does it too often in a gruff and grumbling way.

Then there is the school. Unstinted praise must be given to many masters and teachers for the efforts they are making in this direction. But it is extra work, little opportunity offering itself in the crowded hours and rooms of school.

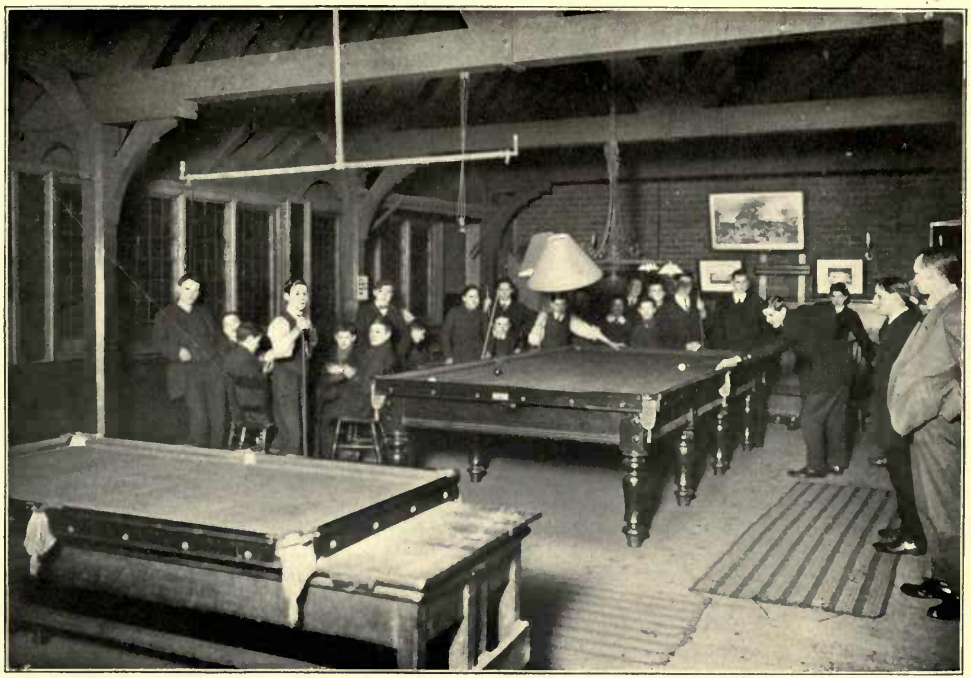
In the factory it is the rare exception if the foreman or the employer pays attention to the small boy who runs messages or feeds a machine. Thus the boy emerges into manhood, a self-made man. 'No one brought me up; I growed.' This is a disastrous state of affairs, and accounts for much that is low and squalid in our larger cities.

There is, however, one exception to this general rule. There is one person ever ready to give advice and to influence the youngsters, *i.e.* the loafer at the corner of the street. The virtuous inhabitants stand aloof; not so with the wastrel who supports the lamp-post. He is ever ready to have the quick-witted, cheery youngster near at hand to help to while away the weary hours of doing nothing. The boy is useful to him too, as a watchman, when he wants to gamble or indulge in other shady occupations. There are thousands of men who owe their existence in the prison or the workhouse or the asylum to the subtle and degrading influence of the corner lounger. 'I got among bad pals' is the

frequent explanation that is given by them for their fall.

Here, then, lies the need. It is for men who will supplement the work of the home and the school by giving to these boys some individual training and the benefit of a healthy influence. Such work is not only necessary, but wonderfully productive. No one is more receptive than the street boy. He is plastic beyond imagination until he reaches the age of sixteen or seventeen. A casual hint; a suggestion as to conduct, couched in sympathetic tones; a strong, but kindly discipline as of an elder brother; above all the wholesome influence of a healthy friend; these are the things a boy needs, and from which he is ready to benefit. They can be given by any man who has intelligence and human sympathy. They are not peculiar to an expert, or the artificial possession of a trained man. All possess them to some extent, and can develop them by use.

It is a popular fallacy to believe that some men are 'good with boys,' and others not. The influence that any man possesses upon a working boy is in proportion to his intelligence and human sympathy. True it is that a club may be uncongenial to some men, because of a retiring nature, or a dislike of noise. But there are working boys of a similar disposition over whom such men can have some power and who will respond to their advice. Still



A SENIOR CLUB

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less is it necessary to be an athlete. A very distinguished football player once stayed a week at a slum club. Great things were expected of him by the staff, and the boys were duly informed of his prowess. But great was the disappointment when judgment was passed that he was ' an awful swanker.' After another visit, when he avoided any mention of his powers, he was liked by many, not indeed as a football player, but as a sympathetic friend. This is the secret: friendship. The working boy needs friends, not athletic or wealthy or educated patrons. Surely the power of friendship belongs to some extent to all.

I have already pointed out countless ways in which this help can be rendered. There is the School Care Committee, through which he can be put into touch with some boy who needs advice as to his future employment, or whose parents are lazy about securing the medical treatment that he needs. There is the young man just out of prison to whom a little sympathy and friendship would make all the difference in the world. Our Reformatories and Industrial Schools are discharging many boys each year who require the influence of a strong friend to check the reaction from the strict discipline of the previous years. There is the clever boy, capable of rising to an important post, for whom a little private tuition would be invaluable. The openings in this direction are innumerable, and lie

ready to hand to any man who is prepared to work, however much he may dislike the boy as a member of a club.

This work can, of course, be done to a large extent by men who are engaged in business, and in the ordinary course of their daily life. The employer who takes an individual interest in the future, the amusement and the interests of his youthful employees, is doing an important work. In his club he will find the page boy, on the golf course there is the caddie. A man who conscientiously tries to discharge his responsibilities to those with whom he is directly thrown into contact will be doing social work of the highest order.

True, he has his wider duties to be discharged to those who have a less direct claim upon his time and attention. A man who is awake to these will find it necessary to give two or three evenings a week to visiting the boys for whose health or employment he has made himself responsible through the After-Care Committees. Anyone, both in his ordinary life and on his spare evenings, will find endless opportunities in every place for doing invaluable social service, even if a club or brigade are uncongenial to him.

There is another opportunity for individual work to which I must call attention. The emigration of working boys to the Colonies has been very prominently before the public in late years. Canada,

New Zealand and Australia offer not only a welcome but also a magnificent opening to any healthy young man who is not afraid of work. I must admit, however, that I am not enthusiastic about it, for there seem to me to be two dangers involved which require careful consideration. In the first place it must be borne in mind that the working boy of our big cities is not usually suited to country life ; in fact, I would go further and say it is exceptional if he is. I have known many boys work their way back from Canada, while others have simply drifted into the big centres of population, where their chance is no better than in England, and where they are complete strangers. I am quite aware that many organizations for emigration take great trouble about providing suitable places for emigrants, but they do not always supervise them afterwards.

It must be remembered also that, as the colonies will only accept strong and healthy boys, any extensive system of emigration will deprive the mother country of her best sons. There are, of course, some boys who are by nature unsuited to factory life, while there are others to whom a fresh start in a different country may make all the difference. To emigrate such boys, under adequate and extended supervision, is very valuable, but it should, I think, be remembered that they are the exception and not by any means the rule.

Before, however, I pass to the Clubs and Brigades

which require separate treatment, I should like to say a word or two in regard to the work of School and College Missions, which are such a prominent feature in the social and religious work in the big centres of population. Their original idea was to form an outlet for social service to the members of a particular school or college, and also to be a place where men could reside among the poor. In addition to these special missions, there are a few settlements unconnected with any one school or college, but which have the same purpose. I have had the privilege of being at the head of two of these settlements, in South London and in Birmingham, and I am desirous of laying stress on three features of the work which appear to me to be of paramount importance.

In the first place, it appears to me to be vitally important that settlements should undertake work that is of a complementary character. The State has extended its machinery to social questions, while the Church has its definite organization as well. It is not the function of a settlement to start a rival organization to these, but to co-operate in, and supplement, their work. Let me take two instances of what I mean. The State has started a system of Labour Exchanges for boys, which will only be effective in proportion to the amount of voluntary effort that they receive. It is the duty of a settlement to supply this assistance, and not

to start some inferior labour bureau for their own particular boys. Or, again, in regard to the Church's work, it is very doubtful whether a school mission should take charge of a parish. For one reason or another the school may wish to move its mission to some other district, in which case the parish is left without any adequate provision for its maintenance. Surely it would do infinitely better work if it undertook more direct missionary and pioneer work among those who are not touched by the ordinary parochial machinery. In this way they would cover a wider area and would be free to move when the occasion for doing so arose.

Then again, their work should be of such a nature as will appeal to those belonging to the school or college with which they are connected. For one of their purposes is to interest boys and undergraduates, and to give to them an opportunity for doing social work. Here, again, it is more than ever doubtful whether it is wise for a school or college to take a parish as its mission. In a parish most of the work is of a description that cannot appeal in the same way as does a club for boys or men. Sick-visiting, mothers' meetings and suchlike essential features of parish life cannot possibly appeal with any force to a healthy Public School boy, whereas a boys' club, in which he can meet others of his own age, though of a widely different class, or the summer boys' camp, give him a human interest in a remark-

ably effective way. This is only an example of what I mean when I say that school and college missions should remember that the value of their work is not only to be judged by its efficiency in assisting the poor, but also in the amount of personal interest that it creates at the school or college with which it is connected.

My last suggestion is perhaps a repetition in a different form of what I have said before. The work of a settlement must be human. There is a very real danger lest the workers in a settlement become investigators rather than friends. So much stress has been laid upon the need for knowledge as well as sympathy, that it frequently happens that the personal work is crowded out by committee meetings, investigations about particular evils and such like impersonal work. However important that may be, it is *not* the proper work of a school mission. Their work is surely that which the late Canon Barnett described as the original ideals of the promoters of Tonybee Hall, ' their desire was, as human beings, to help human beings.'

That should be the guiding principle of all social work. Without it no man can really effect much, especially if the working boy is his first care. No machinery, however skilfully devised, will produce an intelligent, honest, and serviceable man out of a wild and reckless street boy. Organization may check overlapping; social science may prevent

mistakes; but they are means to an end, not ends in themselves. Personal influence, the reaction of character on character, is the only effective force in social or religious reformation.

At present, however, there are comparatively few men forthcoming to do this work. There are many who could spare the time, and who ought to render this invaluable help, so badly needed by many a boy. If any one questions it, let him go and stand near some city station or tram terminus, and let him see the thousands of young men flying to their suburban homes, regardless of the paper boy they leave behind. Some, of course, may have to work for some examination, in order to improve their chances. But an infinitely larger number do nothing in particular in the evenings, and could well spare a night or two a week, with advantage to themselves and to their less fortunate brother in the slums. There are, again, many men belonging to some religious organization, a men's service or adult early morning school, who often rest content with attendance at the class or service, and do nothing more. One cannot help feeling that such classes would receive renewed vigour and stimulus if they as a body made themselves responsible for a club of poorer boys.

It is the man who has been to a Public School or University who ought to be leading in this work. He has had advantages which others have not;

he has natural gifts, unpossessed by other men. For he has mixed with other boys and men, and by contact with them he has learned an ease in manner and a natural freedom from self-consciousness. He can, therefore, make friends easily and quickly. His wider education has given him a bigger outlook upon life. As a monitor or prefect he has learned the art of leadership and a willingness to take responsibility; as a member of a house or college he has become accustomed to forget himself for the good of a common cause. He has, moreover, a chance of becoming interested in the difficulties of the life of a working boy, for most schools and colleges possess some club or settlement. Why is it, then, that in spite of these advantages so few of them respond? One reason is that the appeal is made along wrong lines. The boy at a decent Public School is a generous hearted person, but he is likely to become nauseated with pitiful tales of shoeless urchins and woebegone street arabs. Thrilling stories of parental brutality may appeal to his sentiment, though they will not inspire him to a life of service. A step further must be taken, and an explanation of the causes for such things should be given. The general way in which he could render assistance, other than financial, could be pointed out, as the time for his leaving school draws near. Can we not show him that to help in his club does not mean merely to teach a ragged, dirty boy to

wash his hands and to refrain from swearing, but that it does mean an opportunity to train by personal influence and example those who, by force of numbers, will make or mar their Church and nation in future years ?

A much closer connection, too, between the school and club is desirable. In many cases the school missions are so distant from the school that an interchange of visits is rendered impossible. It is necessary to lay stress on the advisability of making mutual hospitality a possibility. A boy who has seen the club, and who has boxed with Harry Smith and Billy Jones, is far more likely to have his interest stirred than one whose only information about the club is the terminal or only annual visit of the school missioner. Why, for instance, could not the footmen needed in the school houses be obtained from the school club ?

I think a distinguished headmaster rightly diagnosed the situation when he said that Public School boys ' do not care because they do not know.' ' I believe,' he continued, ' that by a certain amount of systematic instruction boys may be quite easily stirred to a real and intelligent interest in these great questions of the day, which may lead them later on to take an active part in their solution.' We tell the boy of wretched youths, their hardships, their crime and their sordidness. So far so good. But it is not good enough. We must teach him

also *why* these youths are wretched, sordid and criminal; what effect such youths have upon the community at large, and who is responsible for their reform.

This is what is meant by those who advocate the teachings of civics. The word civics is, no doubt, a bad one; for it conveys the idea of economic sociology. Its true meaning is instruction as to the origin, the nature, and the method of reform of the social evils which are crushing out any nobility of character from the majority of our countrymen. In some schools a course of civics has been tried with great success. Though this may not always be practicable, it is usually possible for a master to arrange for such instruction for his elder boys. History, for instance, can be put into relation with the present. 'If he is reading,' says Mr. Spence, 'of the Black Death and the Statute of Labourers, he had better be given some notion of our present labour difficulties and learn something of strikes and wages boards.'

Such may be one means of interesting Public School boys and others in social work.

Let me conclude by saying that whatever source they come from, men are urgently needed to supplement the work of the home and school. However complete the organization of his education and labour may be, the working boy will always need the guiding hand of a sympathetic friend, a friend

who will pass on whatever he possesses in the way of character, strength and religious conviction. He needs the unconscious influence and the quiet advice of one who has himself weathered the storms of boyish difficulties and temptations.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLUB.

In the last chapter I tried to suggest certain ways in which a man may be able to assist boys individually, even though he is unwilling to face a crowd of boys together as members of a club. I now turn to the work of a Boys' Club or Brigade, their nature, their management, and the main features of such efforts. The whole idea of a Boys' Club rests on the fact that a working boy is never content unless he is a member of some clique or gang. He simply hates to be alone ; he is by nature sociable, and does not know what shyness is ! It was a realization of this which led Canon Barnett, Quintin Hogg and others to start Clubs for these boys and so to deal with them as members of a clique.

The movement has spread, and now we not only have countless Boys' Clubs all over the country, but other organizations of a kindred nature, such as the Boys' Brigade, the Church Lads' Brigade, and the Scouts. For although the ostensible purpose of these latter organizations was to meet some

particular need, such as discipline, or the cultivation of intelligence and usefulness, yet the fact remains that their work would not last for a day if the boy was not essentially a gregarious creature. It would be absurd for me to do more than touch upon the work of these three useful organizations. For they deal with a class of boy who is as a rule higher up in the social scale than the boy of the slum, with whom I have been connected.

The main difference between the work of a Brigade and that of a Club is that, as the helper in the former is an officer, and must insist upon the boys regarding him as such if proper discipline is to be maintained, it is clear that he cannot be on such intimate terms with the boys as in the case of a Club helper. This may very likely be a wise plan with the better class boy who comes from a decent home, and whose individual training is done by the parents, for his main need is a sense of discipline and obedience. It is a system, however, which is not adapted for this reason to work among the poorest boys. True it is that he also needs to learn obedience and duty, but still more does he need the personal friend, who will by his influence draw out of him his latent powers and characteristics. That is a very broad distinction between the work of a Club and that of a Brigade.

The Scout movement is one that has attracted a very large amount of public notice. There again,

discipline is the main feature of the work. There is no question at all that the movement has done an immense amount of good, though I quite candidly admit that I am not one of its ardent admirers who see in it the solution of all our educational difficulties. Like other organizations, it has its limitations and weaknesses. I am anxious to draw attention to one of these, not because I wish to pick holes, but because I feel that if attention is drawn to it, even by an unknown person like myself, it may lead to reform. It is this. Any man may start a troop of Scouts and receive recognition as such so long as he shows a certain knowledge of Scout-craft. It is quite obvious that all men are not equally fit to take up a work of such an intensely responsible character, involving the moral and religious training of a boy. There is practically no supervision of this side of the Scoutmaster's work, and so there is a grave risk of positive harm being done to the boys. I am saying this as one who has actually had experience of such a disaster taking place. It is most necessary that the Headquarters of the Scout movement should pay the closest attention to this, and should, through their commissioners or some other capable man in each locality, take the greatest care about the choice of Scoutmasters, and maintain the closest supervision of their work. But even when that defect has been remedied, it is open to question whether it will ever

really do much good in the slums. There is, for instance, the practical difficulty about the expense of the uniform and the Saturday afternoon visits to the country. The boys cannot afford it, and it is well known that a boy does not appreciate for long what he gets for nothing. I have tried to start patrols among the poorest street boys, and have been fortunate in getting capable men to start them. But, with one exception, they failed to arouse any real keenness among the boys. I trust, however, that I shall not be considered as being in the slightest degree hostile. I am most fully conscious of the value of the movement in raising the better class boy to a high standard both of discipline and of intelligence.

There is no doubt whatever in my mind that the most efficient way of helping the genuine slum boy and his pals is the Boys' Club, and it is this that I propose to deal with in some considerable detail. For there is extraordinary ignorance shown by educated people as to the value and nature of a Club, partly accounted for by the fact that they are usually hidden away in the slums, and hold no spectacular parades of boys in uniform. I am also encouraged to do so, in the hope that my close experience of such work for over eight years may prove useful to others who are just beginning.

It is usually taken for granted that to run a Boys' Club requires some quite unique faculty with which

but few are endowed. One frequently sees in the advertisements of vacant curacies in the Church newspapers, that a man is required who is 'good with boys' and such like phrases. This is an entire misconception, and it is a dangerous one too, for many men are frightened at attempting the work because they feel that they may not have got this peculiar gift. I am ready to admit that certain qualities are necessary, but they are qualities with which most men are endowed to some extent, and which can quite easily be developed.

(1) The first of these is a devotion to the boy himself, involving a hatred of anything that is likely to impede his development, and a willingness to devote time, money and labour to meet his needs. No mere interest or sense of duty can compensate for the lack of that. Without it a man's work must be cold and spasmodic.

(2) A sense of humour is the second requisite, for the boy is one who enjoys some fun, and does not understand a man who is unable to see a joke.

(3) A working boy has an extraordinary high sense of justice, and a helper who shows favouritism either in rewards or punishment will speedily lose the confidence of the members of his Club.

(4) The management of a Club is not an easy task, and there are many occasions on which it appears useless to continue the work. The influence of a Club, however, does not appear upon the surface,

and when failure seems stamped upon every effort, it is often then that some hidden work is going on. A helper must, therefore, treat depression and dismay as evils to be suppressed, and go on quietly and steadily with the work.

(5) A helper who loses his temper is doomed to failure. Boys will submit his temper to severe tests, and if he comes successfully through the ordeal his influence is assured. I remember an occasion when a young helper, who was left in charge for a night, was locked up in a room by the boys. He said and did nothing, but sat quite quietly reading a book. This spoilt the fun, and after half an hour or so the door was unlocked, and full apologies made. He became an extraordinary power in the club as a result.

(6) The last characteristic of a good helper is the ability to know what he wants, and then to get others to do it for him. For while there can and must be only one head of a Club, the boys will not fully benefit unless they are given some definite responsibility. It is not always easy to allocate work to others and to watch them do it inefficiently. But for their sake it is necessary, and a strong man can afford to do it, so long as he knows what he wants and is sure of his authority. To do everything by oneself in a Club is a sign of weakness.

Such are the characteristics of the ideal helper in a Boys' Club, and his work will be successful in so far as he possesses them. No powers of organiza-

tion, athletic ability or wealth will compensate for the lack of them. But there are few, if any, men who do not possess them to some extent, and who could not develop them if they would.

We must now turn to the management and organization of the Club, and the first problem here is the size of the Club. Those who work in Manchester and London tell us that a Club of 300 to 400 is the best, while a helper in Birmingham will be equally clearly in favour of a small Club with not more than thirty to fifty boys. I am lucky enough to have had experiences of both kinds, and I am convinced that the small club is undoubtedly the best. For a small club makes it easier for the helpers to know the boys individually, and renders it possible for the helper to visit the boys at home, which is so essential if the boy is to be fully understood. There is no doubt that a large Club covers more ground, and possibly may have a more direct influence upon the district in which it is situated. But, it should be remembered, the cost of a big Club and the number of men required to run it will provide for ten or fifteen small Clubs, so that there is little or no gain there.

To my mind, however, the chief advantage of the smaller Club lies in the fact that a helper in a small Club can show initiative and adopt methods peculiar to himself. As one of many helpers in a big Club he cannot do this, for the Head of the Club

must be absolutely supreme. So he fails to make full use of his own powers and abilities. I therefore consider that the ideal size for a Club whose members are under fourteen years of age, is from twenty-five to thirty. The younger the boy is, the more need is there for personal and individual attention. The Club for those over fourteen can therefore be larger, having a membership of fifty to sixty boys.

Then we come to the question as to the age when a boy is admitted. Most Clubs only admit boys when they have actually left school and gone to work. Others start earlier, taking in boys of ten or eleven on the ground that it is necessary to reach the boy before he gains any independence as a regular wage earner. I have had experience of both kinds of Clubs, and I am positive that the latter do the best work, provided that there is a separate Club, though under the same auspices, into which the boy can be drafted when he leaves school. This is the plan which has been adopted by the Birmingham Street Children's Union. It has a large number of Clubs for the younger boys scattered about the city, and a few Senior Clubs in central places to which the younger boys are drafted on reaching the age of fourteen. The chief advantage to be gained from taking the boy earlier is that he is then more susceptible to personal influence. His character is quite unformed, and what habits he may have picked up have not got a hold upon him. If also

he becomes a member of a Club early on in his life, he will choose his 'chinas,' or personal friends, from among the other members of the Club. If he does not join a Club till later, it becomes necessary to reach his friends, or break up his friendships, before much permanent good can be done.

This system has its advantages in another direction. If there is a Senior Club, which is fed by numerous Junior Clubs, opportunities are offered for teaching the elder boys their definite responsibility to the younger ones. They can spend a night or two, for instance, in the Junior Club, helping to organize the games, and in keeping discipline. I shall deal with this more fully later on, and so I pass on to describe one or two small matters of organization.

The Junior Club can very well meet in some schoolroom or other temporary place. The equipment, which is very small, can be put away in a small wooden box, for a pair of boxing gloves, a small bagatelle board, and quieter games such as draughts, ludo, snakes and ladders, halma, snap and happy families are all that is required in the way of equipment. The Senior Club ought to be on a much bigger scale, and a separate building is almost an essential. For here gymnastic apparatus and a billiard table are almost essential. A canteen for Saturday nights, a room for quiet games and reading, are also needed.

A Club must have a football team, entered for some league, with a regular ground to play on, if it is to have a real influence upon the boy. For that is his favourite game without doubt, and if no provision is made for this by the Club, he will get it in other less desirable ways, even if only by going to watch a league match. Other clubs for swimming, running, cricket, bicycling and country walks will all help in making the Club the centre of the boy's life.

The recreations of a Club need the most careful thought and organization, for not only are they uppermost in the boy's mind, but they can also play such an important part in his training. It is through them that he can be taught that all-important lesson of playing for his side, and not for himself. Having had to fend for himself through most of his life, he very naturally has a strong tendency to play for himself. One sees this very clearly in the utter inability of the boy, at any rate in his younger days, to learn the art of 'passing.' When also you ask him about the result of any match he will probably tell you of how many goals he scored, before he tells you the result of the match. This may seem a small matter to some people, but I am quite convinced that if he is allowed to show this spirit in his games, he will also show it in the rest of his life. Teach a boy to play for his side, and he will then more easily grasp the duty of working for the

Club, and from that learn the duties of a true citizen.

But another weakness of the boy is his inability to 'play the game.' He will loudly question the referee's decision when it is against him, and is perfectly ready to resort to any sharp practices by which he can manage to win. I had a remarkable proof of this only the other day. As Chairman of the Council of Workers among boys in Birmingham, which organizes football leagues and other competitions, I had to adjudicate upon six protests from different clubs against their opponents or the referees. Only one of them was at all reasonable, while the others would never have been made or even thought of by Public School boys. It is therefore a primary duty of the Club helper to insist upon his boys playing a clean game and obeying the referee's decision without question or discussion. 'To play the game' fairly and squarely is a lesson that is of intense value throughout life, and a Club which fails to teach it neglects one of its main duties to its members.

A helper in a Club, however, cannot confine his attention only to the organization of the games. Countless duties occupy his time. Registers have to be properly kept, lapsed members have to be looked up, while the weekly subscription, camp payments, and the savings bank will tax his business capacity to the uttermost.

But above all and beyond all is the boy himself. The organization of the Club is nothing as compared to the training of the individual boy and the development of his special capacities. This is the supreme object of the Club, and upon it depends the whole tone and spirit of the Club, and the permanence and efficiency of the work. For this reason I want to suggest sides of this work which need special care and consideration because they are so often neglected.

It is necessary to understand the boy's surroundings and whole environment if the boy himself is to be understood. The helper must visit that boy in his home and obtain an insight into the kind of influences to which he is subject there. The co-operation of the parents, even though only passive, will make the work of the helper infinitely easier, and this cannot be secured if the helper neglects to visit the home. A true friend of the boy will never try to take upon himself the duties of a parent; rather will he strain every nerve to teach the parents their responsibility to the son and be content to supplement their work by being the confidential friend and adviser.

He will also feel it to be a privilege to talk to the individual boys alone on the deeper and serious things of life. There is a fault to be checked, a virtue to be encouraged, not in public before the other boys, but alone on a walk or in a private room. He will speak plainly to the boy about

his body, he will tell him of his duty to his home and to his Club, and he will often act as a sympathetic listener to the boy's confidences about his ambitions and his difficulties. To be allowed to do that is a high privilege with enormous responsibilities, and will far more than compensate for the worries of petty details.

He should act in this capacity to the unpopular and unattractive boy even more than to the others, for it is so very easy for a helper to devote his energies to the boys he feels drawn to. But he must remember that he has a duty to all the boys; and that the quiet, uncouth youngster who is so unpopular and who has but few friends, very probably needs his help and confidence much more than the others do. How often it is that the helper will find under that uncouth and displeasing exterior much undiluted goodness and virtue. The duty of a helper is to dig for gold; he must pierce below appearances and find the true nature of the boy, for all boys were made in the image of God, and in all of them there is much that is noble and pure and good.

The helper will often have another very difficult duty forced upon him. A boy is not always wise in the choice of his friends, and will choose as his 'walking out pal' one that has a bad influence upon him. I remember a case of two boys, each of whom was quite sound and sensible when alone. Together

they were 'impossible'! It was not the fault of either of them; the influence of each upon the other was bad. Still worse, the boy may be thrown into company with one that is bad, and has a degrading influence upon him. These friendships have to be broken up. There are few, if any, more difficult and delicate tasks than to warn a boy of his friends. It is no use merely to tell him 'You ought not to walk out with so and so'; reasons must be given if the advice is to carry weight. Much time will also be spent by a conscientious helper in breaking up the inevitable cliques and sets which will form in the Club, and which so often have a disastrous effect upon the individual members.

In conclusion, we turn to the all-important matter of discipline. For while the helper must first of all be a friend to the boy, he cannot afford to allow unruliness or disorder in the Club. The members must be made to realize that rules have to be obeyed and that obedience is a necessary virtue. No work of any value can possibly be done if the members are out of hand and disorderly, and so the helper must combine friendship with authority. He may, indeed, leave the details of discipline in other hands, but it is his responsibility, and the final work must lie with him. It is for him to decide whether he intends to be an autocratic tyrant, or a constitutional monarch. But he cannot allow democracy, which in a Boys' Club spells confusion and disorder.

With the younger boys he should, I think, be absolutely autocratic. He may consult the wishes of his boys, but he and he alone must make and enforce the rules. Most helpers would say that this should be so also with the elder boys, and there are very few Clubs in which the boys have any real power. I am, therefore, fully alive to the fact that I am running counter to the views of many friends and others, who have had more experience than I have had, when I say that I am convinced that a definite and distinct share of the government of the Club should be given to the boys. There is nothing to my mind which will develop a boy so much as responsibility. No one with any intimate knowledge of a Public School will question the value of the monitorial system, for those who hold office gain enormously from their experience, and very often develop powers which were quite unexpected. Why should not the same chance be given to the working boy? I am certain, from personal experience, that it is of equal value to them. Let me give a description of what is done in this way in the Senior Clubs of the Birmingham Street Children's Union. Each of the Clubs has its own committee of six to eight boys. The head of the Club nominates half of them, the rest being elected by the members. The chairman of this committee is one of the assistant helpers, who is there to advise and guide the discussion, but has no vote or controlling power. The

committee is not merely advisory; it has very definite powers. It can make any rules about the detailed management of the Club, and has the power to suspend or otherwise punish any who break these rules.

Further than this, each Senior Club can send two representatives to a central council, which has the power to fix camp and Club payments, to organize competitions or parties, and to pass rules prohibiting any game or practice in a Club. They have proved themselves fully capable of doing efficient work, although it would be absurd to say that all the committees or councils were equally good. Some of them make mistakes, but that is a universal failing, and they are quick to recognize them when made.

The effect upon them and upon the whole tone of the Club is quite remarkable. For the Club is no longer regarded as a charitable effort of one or two patrons to amuse them. They feel that it is their duty to support it in every possible way, and that the success of the Club largely depends upon their efforts. The whole Union gains too, and a real willingness to help in the work of the Union is manifest. Let me take two examples. Soon after the council was formed, the question of camp payments came up for settlement, and the matter was left in their hands entirely. They promptly and quite unanimously raised the fees by two shillings all round. Another and even more striking proof

lies in the fact that a few of the Clubs for Junior boys are now entirely staffed and excellently managed by the elder Senior boys.

I am convinced, therefore, that it is wise for the Head of a Club to leave as much responsibility as he possibly can to his boys. If he is doing his personal work properly, he can rest assured of their complete loyalty to his slightest wish. Not only will the discipline of the Club be very fully maintained, but he will be free to do his own special work, and will not have to interrupt a private talk with a boy in order to stop a riot or a row. He will also have the satisfaction of knowing that he is giving the boys duties which will reveal their powers as nothing else can do, and which will also develop and train them for the life of a citizen and churchman.

The life of a Club helper is an eminently happy one. Not only can he find real amusement among the boys, but he has the satisfaction of seeing the result of his work writ large upon the faces and appearance of his boys. He will receive grateful letters from old boys who have gone to other parts ; and, best of all, such boys may return for a visit or on furlough, and express in broken phrases their gratitude for his help in previous years. I can promise any man that as a helper in a Club he will not only be giving valuable service, but that he will also reap a full reward in the changed lives and in the unstinted gratitude of his elder boys.

CHAPTER X.

THE SUMMER CAMP.

I MUST admit that it was not my original purpose to write more than a few lines about that indispensable part of Club life, the annual Summer Camp. I felt that as Camp was really but an extension of the Club life, its management was necessarily on the same lines; and also that suggestions from one who had only seen one kind of Camp were likely to be of little value to others. Camp, even more than the Club, depends upon the man at the head, and the methods he adopts must be those of his own making. So that I wish it to be understood quite clearly that I have only in mind the Camp for which I was responsible, and that I do not for one moment claim that the methods which suited me are preferable to those adopted by others. I have seen a Boys' Brigade Camp, a Scouts' Camp, and a large London Club Camp, and they were all extraordinarily good, though if I had tried to adopt their methods, I should have made a desperate mess of the whole business.

The importance of these annual Summer Camps is obvious to any who have watched their work. A boy, who has spent fifty weeks of the year in a squalid court and a foetid workshop, gains untold benefit for his health from his week or fortnight in the open air. The fresh air, the wholesome food, the regular meals, and incessant exercise work miracles with his health.

More than this, Camp affords a helper a unique opportunity of knowing his boys intimately. Whereas in Clubs he may only see his boys for fifteen hours in the week, in Camp he is with them the whole time under circumstances which will reveal the boy as he really is. A clever boy may be able to bluff his helper in a Club ; he cannot do so for long in Camp. But not only in that way does the helper get to know the boys. How many occasions have I experienced when on an evening stroll by the sea shore or along some quiet lane, a boy has revealed to me his inner longings and secret difficulties, which he would never do in the rush and bustle of town life.

These two advantages alone would justify the expense of Camp. But they are not the only ones. For if the Club has any connection with a Public School, the Camp gives a chance to the members of that school to gain their first insight into social work. I have had many Public School boys mixing with the working boy in the Camp, eating with them,

playing with them, and entering into the whole life of Camp. They introduce an invaluable element into Camp life, while they receive keen interest in the work, bred by friendship with the actual working boy.

To my mind, however, the chief advantages of Camp life are the opportunities that are afforded for developing in the boy a sense of responsibility, and for teaching him what religion really means. As, however, these two require more than a passing treatment, I will leave them to the end.

The success of a Camp depends upon its smooth working, so far as even the smallest detail is concerned. I feel, therefore, it is the wisest course to risk being dull and to go fuller into the details of the organization that I found most useful.

The Site.—I am sure that a Camp by the sea is preferable both from the point of view of health and as affording more interest to the boys. It is not always wise, however, to be too close to the sea, where the soil is apt to be too sandy to hold the stakes securely, and too much exposed in case there is a storm. How well do I remember the occasion when, in a foolish moment, we decided to pitch a Camp on a field adjoining the shore just outside Barmouth. A gale got up, and in twelve hours two big marquees and three smaller tents were flat upon the ground! It was a weary night that we spent in a neighbouring mission room.

The other considerations in the choice of a Camp are the nearness of an adequate water supply and the amount of room in the field itself for football and other games. To have to leave Camp to get a game of cricket or football is a very serious drawback.

The Plan of Camp.—It is most important that the tents should be arranged, so as to give a sense of tidiness. It is difficult to make the boys keen on keeping Camp clean, if the tents are pitched in an offhand manner. Camp may teach invaluable lessons in cleanliness and tidiness, and the pitching of Camp should show the importance attached to it.

In the rough plan at the end[1] I give the arrangements that I have found to meet requirements. The only words of explanation that I would add are that the mess tent must be close to the kitchen and stores tent, that the office of the Head of the Camp should be in a central position, and that the chapel tent or tents should be at remote ends of Camp. The Camp of which I have made the plan held 160 boys, and about twenty-five or thirty helpers. Ten boys were allowed to each of the sixteen bell tents in the top left-hand corner, the Prefects and Magistrates sleeping in the two boat tents near by.

Meals.—The important features of the meals are that they should be regular, simple and sufficient.

[1] Appendix A.

The menu, which proved quite satisfactory, was as follows :

Breakfast	8.0	Porridge, with sugar or treacle, and milk.
		Tea.
		Bread and butter.
		Bread and jam.
Dinner	1.0	Stew or joint.
		Plum duff, or rice and jam.
		Bread.
Tea	5.30	Bread and butter.
		Bread and jam.
		Tea.
Supper.	9.0	Cocoa.
		Biscuits.

The cooking has been done for us by policemen, probation officers and others in a voluntary capacity.

Orderly Work.—This is a most important detail in the organization of Camp, and the greatest care is needed in seeing that each boy has an equal share of work.

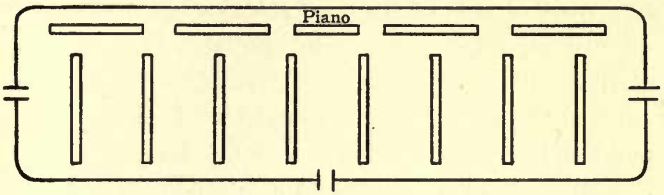
Our plan has been to put on two tents each day to clean the vegetables and wait at meals (one boy serving a tent), and another two tents to do the washing up. This plan will give two days' work each to fourteen tents. The boys in the other two

tents are given special duties, which they do on each day as follows :

Canteen Orderlies - - - -	2 boys.
Games tent Orderlies - - -	2 boys.
(for issue of games)	
Chapel Orderlies - - - -	2 boys.
(for distributing and collecting hymn-books, etc.)	
Latrine Orderly - - - -	1 boy.
Knives Orderlies - - - -	3 boys.
Lamps Orderlies - - - -	3 boys.
Writing tent Orderly - - -	1 boy.
Magistrates' Orderly - - - -	1 boy.
(for collecting culprits together)	
Officers' Orderlies - - - -	4 boys.

The work of waiting on the Mess Orderlies, who have their food after the others have finished, and that of assisting the cook, is left to volunteers arranged the previous evening.

In order to simplify the serving of meals, it has been found a good plan to let the boys from each tent occupy one side of a table with one orderly to wait on it, and on no one else. This means that eight tables to hold twenty boys each must be provided, with three extra tables along one side for carving and serving. I give a plan of the Mess Tent on the following page.



Cost.—I have added as an Appendix [1] the cost, with details, of the Birmingham Senior Boys' Camp for 1913.

Clothes.—In view of the fact that the boys' clothes are not always of the best, and that a boy in rags may feel uncomfortable, we provide each boy with an outfit. On his arrival in Camp, he is given a numbered bag, in which he finds a white linen hat, a white flannel shirt, blue knickers and a pair of sand shoes. Prefect, Magistrates, and Monitors are provided with different coloured shirts to mark their office.

Recreations.—Most of the mornings in Camp are taken up with inter-tent cricket competitions and bathing. Cricket matches against teams of youthful visitors to the seaside are arranged, while expeditions for the day with a lunch of meat and jam sandwiches prove very popular. Fishing, boating and walks occupy the rest of the time until tea, after which a football match is the usual and popular event. The evening is the difficult time to provide for, as a large amount of vocal talent is not always available.

[1] Appendix B.

But whist drives on a grand scale, mock trials, and sometimes impromptu rag-time dancing can be made to fill up the evenings. A bonfire sing-song, when the whole Camp sits round the glowing embers and indulges in the singing of popular choruses, makes a most successful farewell entertainment at the end of Camp.

Discipline.—Camp, as I said above, offers a grand opportunity for giving the elder boys some responsibility, and I feel that some good purpose may be served by describing the method adopted in the Senior Camp of the Street Children's Union. Two months before Camp, each of our eight Senior Clubs is asked to elect a list of boys who shall be eligible for some office, and from them the Head of the Union chooses three Prefects and six Magistrates. These nine boys (usually eighteen to twenty-one years old) are responsible for choosing sixteen tent monitors and a few Camp monitors with special duties. They then draw up the rules of Camp and make suggestions as to its organization, which are submitted to the monitors, and must receive the approval of the Head of the Union.

The Prefects are responsible for the general work of Camp. One of them is in complete control of the mess orderlies; another superintends the washing-up orderlies; while the third one is responsible for seeing that quiet time is kept both morning and evening, and for seeing that lights are

THE CAMP MAGISTRATES

A CHEERFUL GROUP

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out and silence is enforced at night time. Together they are responsible for arranging sing-songs, expeditions, anything, in fact, that requires attention. They are hard at work for most of the day, and seldom have an hour which they can call their own.

The Magistrates have charge of the discipline of Camp. Every morning they meet at the Magistrates' Court, with an Oxford man as their chairman, to help to collect evidence and to announce the verdict, when all boys who have broken any rule or otherwise done wrong are brought before them. They can punish the offender by giving him extra orderly work, by confining him to Camp and by making him dig a pit. In more serious cases, they may order a boy to be thrashed or sent home, but in these cases they must ask the permission of the Head of the Camp before the verdict is announced. In all cases the boy may appeal to the Head Missioner against the verdict, a right that has only been used five times in four years. It is quite extraordinary how impartial and unbiassed their opinions are. Popular boys usually fare worse, while the insignificant youngster who is for ever making a nuisance of himself gets off with a straight lecture on his behaviour. The really extraordinary part is the good spirit in which the punishments are taken. No grudge whatever is borne by a boy against the Magistrates, even when serious punishments are given. The boys trust their decisions as being fair.

There is a tent monitor in charge of each tent, who is responsible for keeping order and for seeing that it is made neat and tidy every morning.

Camp monitors have different duties, and are in charge of the special orderlies which I have named above.

That is a brief sketch of our system, and it has worked amazingly well. Not only is the discipline extraordinarily good, but each Club is keenly anxious to have a representative among the Prefects and Magistrates.

It is often said that if responsibility is given to a working boy, it tends to make him 'put on side.' This has never happened in my experience. Rather does it inspire the boy to work for the Union on his return home even harder than before, and it most certainly develops in him a sense of responsibility, self-respect, and a willingness to serve.

Religious Work.—There is no time when it is easier to instil into the boys a healthy religious spirit. Each morning and evening family prayers are held in the chapel tent, while on Sundays these give way to more formal services. Celebrations of the Holy Communion are also held on two or three mornings each week.

It is impossible to over-estimate the value of a tent, which is fitted up as a chapel, with an altar holding a cross, flowers and candlesticks, and which is exclusively used for services and family prayers.

Reverence is the basis of true religion, and it is quite amazing how even the wildest street boy learns instinctively to bare his head and keep absolute silence in the chapel tent. It is impossible to teach this important lesson if the services are held in the same place as where meals are served, or where concerts are held, whereas I am confident that in the chapel tent many boys have learnt the meaning of a real religious reverence. Many boys, too, are communicants, and to join with fifty or sixty rough working lads in receiving the Blessed Sacrament is an unequalled joy and encouragement to both boys and helpers.

Even that, however, is not all. Every morning and evening one of the Prefects standing among the tents blows a whistle and tells the boys to kneel up on their beds. He leads the boys in saying the Lord's Prayer, after which silence is strictly kept for a minute or more. Now I do not for a moment say that all the boys do intelligently or sincerely pray. A large number do, while even if there are some who do not do so, it is, at any rate, a silent recognition of the Fatherhood of God which cannot but have an influence, and which will result in real prayer.

Add to all this the addresses in the chapel tent, and, above all, the silent influence of the character of a helper whom the boy trusts and knows, and there is in a camp a deep and real religious influence of far-reaching effect.

CHAPTER XI.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

We now turn to the urgent question of how it is possible to give such a boy, as I have tried to describe, a real grip of the Christian truths. For the presentation of Christianity to a working boy in such a manner that he can understand and appreciate its claims upon his life is a problem of intense difficulty. For the methods which can be, and are, adopted must vary according to the abilities and limitations of the teacher. A method that will suit one will not suit another, while working lads are of very different types.

I have no intention of suggesting any specific plans, for each helper must work out his own methods. My purpose is only to suggest certain main principles upon which I believe all methods should be based. Let us leave out of the question those few boys who have been brought up in Christian homes and whose whole training has been directed towards turning them into Christians. There are such boys, and we thank God for them. But the boy we have to

deal with is full of animal spirits. Except for a mere smattering of religious knowledge crammed down his throat in school, he knows nothing and cares still less about Christianity. What, however, is his general attitude towards religion ? What are his characteristics in this respect ?

It is doubtless difficult to sum him up with his many-sided interests, but I should like to point out three important characteristics which are to be found in any boy, though not at definite ages or in definite forms, as some would have us think.

(1) In the first place, I am sure that the average boy has an intense hatred of unreality. He will do nothing unless he has a definite object in doing it. We all know, for instance, how difficult it is to get boys to play a game keenly unless there is a definite honour to be gained by beating some old rival or in playing for some competition. ' What's the good of it ? ' is the question that our average boy always puts to himself, unconsciously perhaps, and sometimes without deep thought as to an answer. The good in it must be obvious, for if he does not see any point in a thing immediately, he has not that tactful way of pretending to be interested which some of his elders have. If he is bored, he will show it in no unmistakable manner.

This is especially noticeable in a boy's attitude towards religion. He has been sent to Sunday School while he was young, it is true, and he may

have been interested, but the good to be got out of Sunday School was not, in the majority of cases, to learn, but simply that he might get a prize or a treat and avoid any risk of trouble from his mother for being in the way while she was cooking the Sunday dinner. Fishing in a neighbouring canal offers a much pleasanter occupation than sitting in a Church.

Religion, as it has been usually presented to him, is out of relation to his needs, and so he does not see much good to be got out of it.

(2) My second point follows on from this. He has frequently been told that one good thing to be obtained from religion is that it makes him good. Now this does really appeal to a boy. In his heart of hearts the English boy has a secret liking for truthfulness, unselfishness and sincerity. Such virtues he knows and appreciates.

But he asks himself, 'Does religion make people honest, and unselfish?' 'Are all people who go to church sincere?' Unfortunately a negative answer is too often forced upon him by his experience. He knows Mr. Smith, for instance, who goes to Church because he hopes the parson will pay his rent; Mr. Brown, who lives in a shop up the street, always goes to the neighbouring chapel, but he is chiefly known for his surliness behind the counter; his elder brother works for Mr. Jones, who is a sidesman at the Church, but all he knows about

that gentleman is that he is utterly inconsiderate of those who work for him. On the other hand, living in the same court is Mrs. Robinson, who has never been to Church, but who is always ready to lend a helping hand at home when things are going badly, and who doesn't make a row when the ball, with which he is playing with a pal, goes through her window.

The time comes when he leaves school and is plunged into factory life, and there he finds two very different types of men. In the first place there is the efficient workman, the leader in any movement towards the betterment of the other men in the shop, but far too often an atheist and agnostic. Honest and sober in character, he is giving time and thought to the trade union or some other kindred organization. He takes an interest in, and trouble with, the boy, who immediately responds and makes him his hero to be imitated and followed. There is, on the other hand, the man with a far-away look in his face, who is but a second-rate workman, who disappears immediately seven o'clock comes round, and who distrusts the bright and headstrong youngster who is so frightfully cheeky and full of ribald jokes. That man goes to the Church, wears a black coat on Sundays, and looks extremely pious. He compares the two in his boyish way, and finds the advantage is distinctly in favour of the non-church goer, and so he decides ' no religion for me.'

(3) But, thirdly, I am convinced that boys are by nature hero-worshippers. 'The children of the poor follow where they are led,' for a working boy is easily led by one who in some way excels himself. The boy will follow anywhere his hero leads, whether to prison or to church. Not only will he follow him, but in his boyish way he is ready to do anything to help his hero. For the only means he has of showing his devotion is that of active service, in doing some tangible and definite job in aid of his leader.

With this estimate of the boy's point of view in mind, I am of opinion that there are three principles upon which the religious instruction should be based.

In the first place, I should say that the teaching we give must be positive rather than negative. A boy's nature rebels instinctively against rules and regulations. If he is told not to do a thing, quite naturally his one ambition is to do the forbidden thing. Now where so much of Christian teaching has failed, is in the fact that men have too often tried to teach him what he ought not to do; that a Christian boy must not gamble or swear or lie or steal. Now this is of course perfectly true, but it appears to me that it is not wise to start on this. We want to show him first of all what Christianity is. The boy, I have said, is a hero-worshipper. Let us take advantage of that, and in the person of Christ, give him a hero to follow. Our teaching

should be directed to placing before the boy the plain story of who Christ was, where He lived, what He did, what purpose He had in all His life, how He founded the Church to carry out His purpose, how it is possible to meet Him in prayer and through the Sacraments, and what He expects from men and boys as an expression of their devotion to Him.

Boys too often think of religion as being a code of rules, and as Christ as the Author of that code. Let us rid him of that idea, and fire his imagination, show him what the Kingdom of Heaven stands for to-day ; how that, when the Kingdom is established, his mother will not have to work for practically no pay, and his father will not then spend all the family's money at the public house. Let us tell the boy too of how St. Stephen, St. Paul, St. Peter and other martyrs gave up their lives for the extension of this Kingdom, and he will readily admit that religion has a reasonable claim upon his time and devotion. This is a much harder task than a mere negative instruction. But it is worth doing, because a boy will then avoid evil of his own free will, and not because you have told him. It is necessary, therefore, that we should aim at positive, rather than negative instruction, at firing a boy's imagination by the ideal of the Kingdom of Heaven and its Sovereign Christ, rather than at telling him of the awful things that await him if he does wrong.

I would suggest further that our religious instruction must be personal; if the Christianity taught is to be permanent and is to effect the boy's everyday life, it must be given by a person to a person, and not by a teacher impersonally to a class. It is for this reason that the person, whom the boy knows and meets in other things besides the Bible Class or Sunday School, is the one to teach him effectually. We are often told that it requires a skilled man to teach a boy. I quite agree that it does take skill to teach a boy religion, but if by a skilled man is meant one who has gained a diploma in education or one who is a theologian, I entirely disagree. These things may be important, but the real skill needed is in knowing the boy to be taught. A man may be a splendid teacher, as regards getting the knowledge into a boy's head, and he may be a deep theologian, but he will not, therefore, necessarily be able to teach a boy to be a Christian in conduct.

For it is essential for him to have a knowledge of the boy to be taught, his peculiarity of temperament, his home, his relations, his own special difficulties, his interests and his amusements. In a class he must be able to put his teaching into relation with the boy's life, and such teaching must be backed up by individual explanation. Club helpers, therefore, have no right to delegate this duty to someone else. They know the boy; they have the requisite skill

to teach him, not possessed perhaps by anyone else. It is a difficulty that some Club helpers, either from youth or an unwillingness to speak about such things, feel quite unable to give this instruction. Such men should ask the neighbouring Clergy to come into the Club, so that they may get to know the boys in their ordinary interests. If the Clergy say they cannot do this, then let them get someone to help in the Club who is willing to teach. But, however it is arranged, let it be a matter of first importance that the teacher is one who knows him personally, and is one whom the boy looks to as friend and elder brother.

Now I come to the third principle, and that is, that he should place before the boy the active rather than the passive side of the Christian life. As I have tried to point out, a boy will naturally try to do something for the person whom he has made his hero. If then, we place before a boy the person of Christ, he will quite naturally desire to do something for Him.

So many of our organizations for boys are quite content if they turn out passive Christians; if their boys attend Sunday Schools and Bible Classes and are regular in their religious duties. But it appears to me that this is not sufficient. We have more than enough respectable Christians. We want to-day, more than ever, young men and boys who are active Christians. To effect this we

must teach the working boy that the Church of Christ does not exist either to enforce an ethical code, or to provide amusements with a little religion thrown in, but that it was founded by Christ to afford boys as well as adults the opportunities, the motive, and the power, to assist in the extension of the Kingdom of Heaven. I am quite confident that it is that side of religion which appeals to the boy. He must find an outlet for his boundless energy and keenness. Is it not possible and wise to give him an outlet where the energy may be used for the extension of Christ's Kingdom? This is not mere theory. In spite of various objections and though one meets with failures, my experience has convinced me that the best way to deepen and make permanent a boy's religion is to give him something to do. But it may be asked, 'What can I give my boys to do?' They can be given odd jobs to do in the Club; arrangements can be made for some boys to do all the cleaning and repairs so as to save money. Others can be turned on to look after the younger boys; to look up boys who are drifting from the Club. They can be taught to pray for others, and they should be made to understand that their membership of the Club involves the responsibility of seeing that their example upon other boys is clean and true. If a boy feels, for instance, that he has some share in Christ's work, then he will see a point in praying.

THE PROBLEM

THE CAMP CHAPEL

Facing p. 154

He will realize the necessity of obtaining some power outside himself to enable him to accomplish the work allotted to him. Whatever method is used, it is of vital importance that the boys be taught that the extension of Christ's Kingdom must be their aim, and that to do that they must get the power through prayer and in the Sacraments.

These principles which I have suggested make it absolutely necessary that the instruction should be strictly denominational. A mere vague undenominationalism has nothing solid or real about it which the boy can grasp, for it tells of no definite Church to serve, nor can it suggest any clear lines along which that service can be rendered or the power obtained. It is, therefore, essential that any Bible Class or other effort should be in close connection with some denomination, and that it should be taken by a member of it. I have known many Bible Classes or boys' Sunday services in connection with Clubs which have failed to inculcate a deep and real devotion because of their neglect of this important feature.

This does not prevent a Club from extending its membership to boys of all denominations. At any rate, it has been no difficulty in the Birmingham Street Children's Union, where every boy is treated so far as his religious training is concerned as a member of a definite denomination. The younger boys are sent to their different Sunday Schools,

while with the elder ones, though there is no actual religious test, they are encouraged to attend their own place of worship. We have both boys and helpers who are Churchmen, Roman Catholics and Nonconformists.

The actual detailed methods as to service and classes I cannot discuss fully, for, as I have said before, the man must make his own method.

I am quite clear in my own mind that a Bible Class ought not to take the place of a service, even if the latter is held in a Club. For it is so very important that the boy should be taught that duty of reverence through some form of worship. A Club will, of course, gain enormously if it has a chapel, but failing this, the greatest care should be taken as to silence, behaviour, and reverent demeanour. Nothing perhaps does more harm than any laxity in this direction.

While Club services of a simple nature are most valuable, they should only be treated as the preliminary steps to attendance at Church. The elder boys, at least, should be strongly urged to go at any rate once on a Sunday in addition to the Bible Class or Club service, and it is a great help in this direction if special pews can be reserved for the members of the Clubs.

One last word on that which must be the most essential feature of all our religious work in connection with the Church. Nothing can possibly

take the place of our Lord's own service. I am more than ever convinced that it is the Celebration of the Holy Communion which makes the strongest appeal to the working boy. It seems a truism to say so, but yet there are countless club managers who undervalue the importance of the Confirmation class and the Holy Communion service. Nothing could be more fatal. Many arrange for a monthly corporate Celebration, and I quite agree that such a definite attendance should be strongly urged. But there is the danger lest the boys only go on that Sunday, and ignore it altogether on the other Sundays. This is a great mistake, as regular attendance means more to the boy than any one can adequately express. It is but a small thing, I know, but the self-sacrifice to the boy involved in getting up by 8 a.m. on a Sunday morning, instead of staying in bed till the usual hour of twelve or one, is of value in itself.

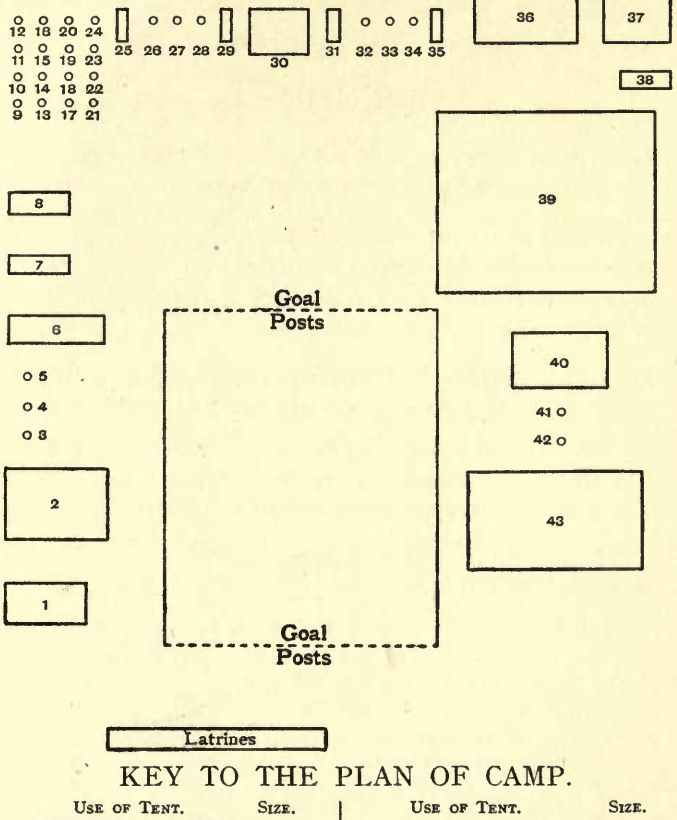
In it the boy finds what he needs, the opportunity of worshipping in a very close way his Divine Master and Leader, and also that divinely appointed means by which he receives the force, power and inspiration for a life dedicated to his Master's service.

Naturally, therefore, the Confirmation class will take a prominent place in the winter's work. I am quite clear that, save in very exceptional circumstances, classes should be taken by a clergyman, if only to emphasize the distinction between it and

the ordinary Club Bible Class. I am, on the whole, in favour of one large class, rather than a few smaller ones, as the boys are helped if they realize that there are others with them, while it gives the man who takes it a chance of infusing the same kind of spirit among all the boys. It is hardly necessary to say that together with this class there must go the regular weekly individual talk and preparation, which are so absolutely indispensable.

The working boy has a deeply religious spirit, however hidden it may be, and willingly responds to a call to service and devotion. It is a deep responsibility lying upon each helper to interpret that call in language that the boy can understand, and through instruction, and still more by influence, to teach him true devotion to, and loyal whole-hearted service of, his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX A.



KEY TO THE PLAN OF CAMP.

Use of Tent.	Size.
1. Roman Catholic Chapel tent	16′ by 16′.
2. Writing tent	20′ by 16′.
3-5. Helpers' tents	Bell tents.
6. Magistrates' court	12′ by 12′.
7. Magistrates' tent	Boat tent.
8. Prefects' tent	Boat tent.
9-24. Boys' tents	Bell tents.
25. Officers' tent	Boat tent.
26 and 27. Officers' tents	Bell tents.
28. Ambulance tent	Bell tent.
29. Officers' tent	Boat tent.
30. Head of Camp's office	16′ by 16′.
31. Officers' tent	Boat tent.
32-34. Officers' tents.	Bell tents.
35. Adjutant's office	Boat tent.
36. Kitchen	Wooden erection.
37. Stores tent	20′ by 16′.
38. Cooks' tent	Boat tent.
39. Mess tent	60′ by 40′.
40. Canteen	16′ by 16′.
41. Games tent	Bell tent.
42. Officers' tent	Bell tent.
43. Chapel tent	45′ by 25′.

APPENDIX B.

COST OF ARTICLES, FOOD, ETC., REQUIRED FOR A SUMMER CAMP.

The cost of each article is given, except in certain instances where the total cost only is available, incurred in a camp which was attended for a week by 180 boys and officers, of whom 110 stayed for a fortnight

EQUIPMENT (including carriage to and from camp, erection and demolition, and services of two men for the whole time).

1 60/40 tent (marked 39 in plan) -	at	£6	10	0	each.
1 45/25 tent (marked 43 in plan) -	,,	4	10	0	,,
2 20/16 tents (marked 37 and 2 in plan) - - - - -	,,	1	10	0	,,
3 16/16 tents (marked 1, 30 and 40 in plan) - - -	,,	0	10	0	,,
24 Bell tents (marked 3-5, 9-24, 26-28, 32-34, 41-42 in plan)	,,	0	10	0	,,
7 Double Boat tents (marked 7, 8, 25, 29, 31, 35, 38 in plan) -	,,	1	5	0	,,
1 12/12 tent (marked 6 in plan) -	,,	0	15	0	,,
3 Boilers - - - - - -	,,	0	15	0	,,
1 Range - - - - - -	,,	1	10	0	,,
1 Kitchen shelter (marked 36 in plan) - - - - -	,,	2	0	0	,,
Tabling and seating for 180 - -	,,	6d. per head.			
12 Square tables - - -	,,	0	1	0	each.
360 Blankets - - - -	,,	0	0	7½	,,
180 Bed cases - - - -	,,	0	0	5	,,
180 Pillow cases - - - -	,,	0	0	1	,,

EQUIPMENT—*continued.*

180 Waterproof ground sheets -	at £0	0	4 each.
6 Six gallon tubs - - -	,, 0	3	6 ,,
45 Wall lamps - - - -	,, 0	0	6 ,,
40 Buckets - - - - -	,, 0	0	6 ,,
1 Water tank - - - -	,, 0	10	0 ,,
Brooms, and sundry fittings - -	,, 5	0	0
Straw for beds and pillows - -	,, 2	18	0

FOOD.

Beef at 7½d. per lb.,
Mutton at 7½d. per lb.,
Suet at 8d. per lb.,
Bread at 5½d. per loaf,
Flour at 1/8 per stone,
} Contract Prices.

CLOTHES.

Shoes at about 1/6 each (if contract prices are secured).

Knickers at - - 18/6 doz.
Shirts at - - 15/9 ,,
Hats at - - - 6/6 ,,
Bathing slips at 4/- or 5/- ,,
} Life about 3 years. Renewals, say £10 per annum.

PERMANENT EQUIPMENT.

Knives, forks, spoons, plates, plate racks, mugs, urns, cooking utensils, etc., etc., can be bought wholesale and cost distributed over about three years.

TOTAL COST OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS.

Mineral waters - - - - -	£6	10	0
Canteen supplies (contract prices) - -	13	5	0
Milk - - - - - - -	3	15	0
Grocery (contract prices for each article)	30	0	0
Vegetables - - - - - -	4	10	0
Coal and wood - - - -	1	10	0
Hire of piano and harmonium	1	15	0

APPENDIX C.

TIME TABLE FOR HOLIDAY SCHOOL, 1911-12.

BOYS.

		Class I.	Class II.	Class III.	Class IV.	Class V.
1st Session—Each Day (2-0—3-15)		Leather Work.	Woodwork.	Fretwork.	Bent Iron.	Basket Work.
2nd Session (3-15—4-30)	Thurs., Dec. 28...	Cooking.	Tailoring.	Painting.	Clay-modelling.	Tailoring.
	Fri., „ 29...	Tailoring	Cooking	Tailoring	Painting	Clay-modelling
	Mon., Jan. 1...	Painting.	Painting.	Cooking.	Tailoring.	Painting.
	Tues., „ 2...	Musical Drill.	Musical Drill.	Painting.	Games.	Games.
	Wed., „ 3...	Cooking.	Tailoring.	Musical Drill.	Musical Drill.	Musical Drill.
	Thurs., „ 4...	Tailoring.	Painting.	Cooking.	Tailoring.	Clay-modelling.
	Fri., „ 5...	Painting.	Cooking.	Tailoring.	Clay-modelling.	Tailoring.

GIRLS.

		Class I.	Class II.	Class III.	Class IV.
1st Session—Each Day (2-0—3-15).		Basket Work.	Dressing Dolls.	(*a*) Dressing Dolls. (*b*) Wool Work.	Wool Work.
2nd Session (3.15—4.30)	Thurs., Dec. 28...	Wool Work.	Painting.	Wool Work.	Bead Work.
	Fri., „ 29...	Painting.	Wool Work.	Painting.	Clay-modelling.
	Mon., Jan., 1...	Wool Work.	Painting.	Wool Work.	Bead Work.
	Tues., „ 2...	Musical Drill.	Musical Drill.	Games.	Games.
	Wed., „ 3...	Painting.	Wool Work.	Musical Drill.	Musical Drill.
	Thurs., „ 4...	Wool Work.	Painting.	Wool Work.	Artificial Flowers.
	Fri., „ 5...	Painting.	Wool Work.	Wool Work.	Clay-modelling.

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